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ABSTRACT

Positions taken in Phi Beta Kappa orations between 1782 and 1837 were examined to determine whether partisan stands were taken on controversial issues. The orations that were located suggest that the speakers' social and political choices did not correlate with specific systems of ideas. The Enlightenment offered intellectual arguments as ways to oppose economic, political, and social transformations. For example, the power of human reason to discover a natural order in ethics, politics, and other realms received some attention. Orators with varying experiences employed the available philosophy in ways that helped them adapt to a developing market economy. Conflicts about the suitability of controversial oration topics arose because Americans were trying to shape their institutions. However, neither the personal nor educational backgrounds of the Phi Beta Kappa orators automatically served as a basis for predicting their responses to social and political questions. In the 19th century, educators aligned with the ruling orders found that the philosophy they advocated could promote unexpected consequences. Biographical information about Phi Beta Kappa anniversary orators during 1782-1837 is appended, along with a list of the orators and the title of their addresses, arranged by college/university and chronologically. A 15-page list of references concludes the dissertation. (SW)

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR IN THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD: THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF COLLEGE EDUCATION, 1782-1837

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Marta Wagner
December 1983

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ABSTRACT

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR IN THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD: THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF COLLEGE EDUCATION, 1782-1837

Marta Wagner

Yale University

1983

In 1800 Yale's Phi Beta Kappa chapter withdrew its sponsorship from the oration that Abraham Bishop had prepared for the society's anniversary celebration. Outraged because his address attacked the policies of the Federalist administration, Bishop's opponents asserted that the organization had nothing to do with politics and that controversy had never intruded into their festivities. Despite their claims, an examination of the earliest existing Phi Beta Kappa discourses reveals a diversity of opinions on partisan issues. Except for Bishop, however, no one between 1795 and 1800 challenged the prevailing distribution of power.

By the end of the eighteenth century, many educated Americans, not just members of the Phi Beta Kappa, were wielding intellectual categories as weapons in their battles over economic, political, and social transformations. Seeking a monopoly on the truth, they attributed fundamental conflicts over who should benefit from the development of

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the United States to the inadequacies of their rivals' philosophy. Adherents of the dominant elements presumed that they could curb disquieting tendencies by eradicating a particular version of Enlightenment thought.

Contrary to these expectations, the surviving Phi Beta Kappa orations between 1782 and 1837 suggest that the speakers' social and political choices did not correlate with specific systems of ideas. In fact, individuals with varying experiences employed the available philosophy in ways that helped them adapt to a developing market economy. Conflicts arose because Americans, limited by their circumstances, were trying to shape the institutions in which they were participating. Neither the personal nor educational backgrounds of the Phi Beta Kappa orators automatically served as a basis for predicting their responses to social and political questions. In the nineteenth century, educators aligned with the ruling orders, like Bishop's adversaries, found that the philosophy they advocated could promote consequences other than those they sanctioned.

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PREFACE

This project began with a vague conception that the earliest Phi Beta Kappa orations would provide readily accessible primary sources for an investigation into an historical problem I had been puzzling over for some time. I knew that the changes in American philosophy in the early national period somehow corresponded to transformations in society, economics, and politics. I wanted to develop a general theory about why those transitions occurred and trace precisely how particular instances manifested themselves. Only when I started to write about my findings did I realize how my interest in individuals' attitudes toward education reflected my own situation. I now believe that my attempt to connect material drawn from social and intellectual history addresses issues currently confronted by many people. From the historical examples treated in this dissertation, I have derived insights that I plan to apply in my future work as a scholar, teacher, and political activist.

I appreciate the resources made available by the University Library and the Yale Computer Center. I am also grateful for the assistance I received at the Boston Public Library, Bowdoin College Library, Brown University Archives, Columbia University Libraries, Dartmouth College Library, Detroit Public Library, Library of Congress, Massachusetts Historical Society, New York Historical Society, and Harvard University Library, especially the Harvard University Archives.

I would like to acknowledge the aid furnished by the Yale History Department. I am particulary indebted to the employers who helped me balance my duties with work on this dissertation: the Frederick Douglass Papers, Branford College, and the professors in whose courses I assisted.

A special tribute is due to my adviser, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, for his patience and encouragement and, most recently, for his example of devotion to a life of scholarship. My dissertation has derived much improvement and none of its flaws from the thoughtful comments of Edmund S. Morgan, David B. Davis, Elizabeth Blackmar, Jeff Merrick, Hugh Joswick, Barbara C. Smith, Peter Dimock, and Jack McKivigan.

This project would not have been possible without the personal support supplied by my friends, of whom the most consistently remarkable is Martha Williams. I owe a profound debt to the men who have discussed with me their philosophies and their biographies, prompting me to make the sorts of connections contained in the following analysis. For the most concrete insights into the relationships between politics and education, I am obliged to Congressman Bruce A. Morrison. In a similar vein, I want to thank the women who helped me understand the limitations involved in studying 193 speeches given by men. My deepest gratitude belongs to my aunts and grandmothers for their love and faith and to my late mother for her inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

"NO DISSENTIONS, NO DIFFERENCES OF PARTY...ARE ADMITTED"

In 1800 Abraham Bishop, a Yale graduate, drafted an address for the Connecticut Phi Beta Kappa's anniversary celebration, held on the day before commencement in New Haven. Sometime prior to the event he submitted a copy of the address to the society's secretary. Evidently none of the preceding orators on such occasions, first instituted at Harvard in 1782, had undergone a preliminary review. Bishop apparently suspected that the organization might not like what he intended to say. An active supporter of Thomas Jefferson, he had written a speech that tried to persuade others to elect his candidate President of the United States. After winning that office, Jefferson appointed the speaker's aged father, who was serving as New Haven's mayor, collector of the port - a post soon filled by Abraham Bishop himself.[1]

Bishop later claimed that the Connecticut chapter had approved his text initially. Then three days before the scheduled ceremony a meeting called without his knowledge and dominated by previously absent older affiliates reversed this decision. The rescinding resolution reprimanded Bishop for "involving the members in that political turmoil which disgraces our country." The Phi Beta Kappa voted to conduct its festivities without a literary exhibition.[2]

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[1] Abraham Bishop, Connecticut Republicanism: An Oration on the Extent and Power of Political Delusion (n.p., 1800); Abraham Bishop, Appendix to Oration Delivered in Wallingford (New Haven: William W. Morse, 1801), p. 101; Key Reporter, October 1956; Oscar M. Voorhees, The History of Phi Beta Kappa (New York: Crown Publishers, 1945), p. 66.

Bishop, meanwhile, reserved another hall and delivered the proscribed discourse. As the Yale records noted, he had already "caused his Oration to be printed without the sanction of the Society." Quite possibly Bishop attracted more attention under these circumstances than he would have otherwise. He emphasized the quantity and quality of his listeners: "The audience was in number about 1500, among whom were many ladies (whom I have seen among other ladies,) and certainly eight clergymen."[3]

According to the secretary's minutes, the chapter had "appointed [Bishop] to pronounce an Oration at the approaching Anniversary in full confidence that the honor of the Society would be regarded in the advancement of Science & Friendship." Supposedly his choice of subject matter betrayed this trust. The organization expressed its displeasure when it discovered that "Bishop[,] wholly forsaking the objects of its institution, [had] prepared for exhibition an Oration on political subjects to advance the interests of a party." Six years later another Yale speaker stated that the norms governing the Phi Beta Kappa prohibited all controversial topics: "Its only objects are the promotion of Literature and of Social Intercourse. No dissensions, no differences of party, nothing which can violate the laws either of God or Man are admitted within its walls."[4]

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[2] Bishop, Appendix, pp. 101-2; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 8, 1800, Yale University Archives (hereafter YUA); Key Reporter, October 1956.

[3] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 8, 1800; Bishop, Appendix, p. 102; Connecticutensis, Three Letters to Abraham Bishop, Esquire, Containing Some Strictures on His Oration (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1800), p. 8; Key Reporter, October 1956.

Bishop asserted the falseness of such formulations of the association's goals. He referred to the statement "that the society had no connection with politics" as one of the "enormities" contained in the act withdrawing sponsorship from his talk. As this dissertation demonstrates, Phi Beta Kappa orators took partisan stands on a wide variety of issues both before and after 1800. The outrage that Bishop provoked represented more than an objection to political discussions.[5]

I

In an anonymous pamphlet that appeared after Bishop's performance, one of his antagonists impugned his conduct as "extremely uncivil" and "ungentlemanly." This attack attempted to discredit the speaker's character. According to the author, Bishop had committed indiscretions that anticipated the incident in which his "effrontery had overleaped all the bounds of decency." In other words, Bishop's breaches of the code of polite behavior made him unfit for membership in the Phi Beta Kappa.[6]

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[4] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 8, 1800; Samuel F. Jarvis, Want of Patronage the Principle Cause of the Slow Progress of American Literature (New Haven: Oliver Steele & Co., 1806), p. 20.

[5] Bishop, Appendix, p. 102.

Originally, Bishop's background did not differ markedly from the pattern set by the rest of the orators. He belonged to an influential New Haven family, and his father enjoyed a long and distinguished career in public office. Born in 1763, Bishop shared many experiences of the era of American independence with those who spoke ahead of him. After graduating from Yale in 1778, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1785. A founding member of the Phi Beta Kappa chapter, Bishop had served as its second president.[7]

Later critics of Bishop's politics declared that his waywardness emerged after a European tour that began early in 1787 and lasted until the fall of 1788. Whatever impact the political and intellectual turmoil abroad might have had on his pre-existing proclivities, when he returned to America he worked against the ratification of the federal Constitution. During this period, Bishop occupied himself with teaching and lecturing. In 1791, while living in Boston, he published some of his views, mostly under a pseudonym. The next year Bishop married the daughter of Timothy Dexter, an uncouth magnate from Newburyport, Massachusetts. This unhappy union ended in divorce after the birth of a daughter.[8]

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[6] Connecticutensis, Three Letters, pp. 5-8.

[7] Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36), 2:294; Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 6 vols. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1885-1912), 4:17; Connecticutensis, Three Letters, p. 7; Key Reporter, October 1956.

Back in New Haven again, Bishop secured a series of court clerkships. Apparently the difficulties he encountered while soliciting political appointments within the prevailing system helped estrange him from the ruling powers. Along with other northerners, Bishop joined a speculation in Indian lands proceeding under the auspices of the state of Georgia. When he discovered his investment in jeopardy, he produced two pamphlets in which he denounced the venture as "a standing act of rebellion against the law of nature, which gives lands to the first occupants." Bishop's foes contended that he adopted and repudiated his progessive principles at his convenience. Although by the standards of his social peers he was becoming increasingly eccentric, by 1800 Bishop had done nothing to preclude the invitation to exhibit a discourse at the Phi Beta Kappa anniversary.[9]

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[8] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 4:17-20; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 2:294-95; Connecticutensis, Three Letters, pp. 5-6; Abraham Bishop [John Paul Martin], History and Visions of Clio (Boston: Isaiah Thomas & Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1791).

[9] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 4:18-21; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 2:295; Abraham Bishop to David Daggett, May 19, 1794, YUA; C. Peter Magrath, Yazoo: Law and Politics in the New Republic (Providence: Brown University Press, 1966), pp. 151-52; Abraham

II

The efforts of Bishop's adversaries to prove his general ignobility notwithstanding, the furor essentially concerned the content of his remarks. He offended them by his assault on the existing authorities. One polemic censured Bishop's "abuse of all men in power - all lawyers - all merchants, and all the clergy." This opponent reproached him for "directly attacking all the venerable institutions of Connecticut." In another anonymous diatribe against Bishop, Noah Webster defended "the councils of old, upright and able men, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of our citizens." Succinctly articulating the substance of the dispute, the first writer accused the Jeffersonian of teaching "that it was the duty of the poor to arm against the rich and destroy them."[10]

Using rhetoric that evoked the controversies of the War for Independence, Bishop assailed Federalist policies for creating an aristocracy by means of "delusion." He condemned "the elevation of [a few] to a condition of power, splendor and infallibility" at the expense of "the laboring and subordinate people throughout the world." In his endeavor to rally ordinary Americans behind the Democratic-

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Bishop, *Georgia Speculation Unveiled* (Hartford, CT: Elisha Babcock, 1797), and *Georgia Speculation Unveiled, Second Part* (Hartford, CT: Hudson & Goodwin, 1798); [Noah Webster], *A Rod for the Fool's Back* (New Haven: Read & Morse, 1800), pp. 8-9.

[10] Connecticutensis, *Three Letters*, pp. 6-8, 21; [Webster], *Rod*, p. 7.

Republicans, Bishop did in fact excoriate the dominant interests named by his detractors.[11]

Deprecating the control merchants had over the Federalist administration, Bishop expressed his disapproval of arrangements protecting American shipping. He observed how the "commercial system" exploited "the yeomanry." "Confining the carrying trade to ourselves, opens an infinite field of credit to the merchant. Millions of property, belonging to the farmers, must constantly be in the hands of the merchants." With this accumulation of resources, the country's rulers did not need the sanction of the people at large to accomplish their projects: "Government has thereby secured a number of capitalists to whom resort may be had in the day when grinding runs low at the treasury." According to Bishop, the valuable agricultural staples of the United States would always reach foreign markets because the vessels of other nations would seek them out. Demolishing the incentives to profit from transporting these goods would increase the independence of the producers whose ballots he was wooing.[12]

To the defects of commerce Bishop linked the privileges acquired by bankers and stockjobbers.

> Before the adoption of this system silver and gold moved according to the laws of industry; but now banks are introduced, giving to paper a forced and unnatural circulation, taking command of the medium of all business from the agricultural interest, and yielding it wholly

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[11] Bishop, Connecticut Republicanism, p. 2.

[12] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

to the commercial.

In a footnote he added a theory of value that mistrusted the flimsiness of credit: "Money ought to represent industry: the farmer's dollars earned by labor do represent it: bank bills do not." Because of "the complexity of this policy," Bishop argued, the real workers could not see that ultimately their toil paid for measures they might not countenance, including "the whole of the Algerine tribute, the expense of all commercial treaties - of all the consuls abroad - the amount of all the losses by sea - of all bad markets, and of all navy expenses."[13]

To safeguard international commerce, the Federalists were strengthening another potential aristocracy that Bishop disparaged - "the civil, military and naval functionaries." He maintained that the possiblity of war delighted "an immense multitude" of disreputable types, among them "the legions attached to admiralty courts, insurers, dealers in stock, bankrupts and all men to whom change of times must be for the better." Even though most Americans would not benefit from the hostilities, he submitted, their leaders could persuade them to discharge their patriotic duty: "The great, wise and rich men well understand the art of inflaming the public mind and generally present at the outset the delusive bubble of national glory, a thing in which nine tenths of society have no kind of interest." In his view, a standing army or "a powerful navy" would not preserve freedom; rather, by causing "great distinctions, enormous expenses and cruel wars," armaments tended "to destroy a condition of equal rights and to sacrifice private competence and social happiness on the altar of national greatness."[14]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

Bishop also decried the alliance between "principalities" and "those who profess to be officers of a kingdom not of this world." The current administration, he claimed, was employing religion "as a state engine." Bishop deemed his own attitude more reverential: "The Captain of salvation is not so weak as to need an army and navy and a majority in congress to support his cause."[15]

In the most inflammatory of his charges, Bishop discredited the recipients of special favors who perpetrated their deceptions through exceptional knowledge.

> These great men, who are to gain by every system injurious to freedom and equal government, are the best informed men in society. They are well versed in languages and history and political science, and are able to say more and argue better on the wrong side of the question than the people are on either side of it.

Many admirers of the Phi Beta Kappa certainly did not appreciate the aspersions he cast on individuals who achieved ascendancy "by circumstances of fortune, birth or superior bestowments of mind or better education."[16]

Whatever Bishop's critics might have asserted, an examination of the earliest existing Phi Beta Kappa addresses reveals precedents for topics as controversial as his. The first five chapters of this dissertation indicate the diversity of positions taken by the orators in the period through 1795. The ten surviving discourses display stances ranging across the political spectrum of the era. Despite disagreements among educated Americans, speakers advocated such reforms as changes in bankruptcy laws, the code of honor, and the treatment of animals. Between 1795 and 1800, however, none of the opinions expressed at the anniversary celebrations appeared likely to have offended Bishop's opponents. The four remaining texts from those years, examined in the sixth chapter, contain definite exhortations on contemporary issues; nonetheless, they all endorsed the distribution of power and wealth that Bishop execrated. Apparently no one objected when John T. Kirkland's talk at Harvard in 1799 raised many of the same questions about America's future but reached conclusions exactly opposite to Bishop's.

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[14] Ibid., pp. 11-12, 15.

[15] Ibid., pp. 19-21.

[16] Ibid., pp. 27, 29.

III

Clearly Bishop violated the self-imposed unity observed by the Phi Beta Kappa orators at the end of the eighteenth century. Still, the members of the Yale chapter who wanted to silence him did not have to react so vehemently. Once they knew the contents of Bishop's piece, they could have simply showed their disdain by staying away from the exhibition. One of his adversaries even acknowledged that Bishop's rhetoric was "insufficient to unsettle the public mind, and to destroy that state of things which rests on experience, reflection and conviction." His foes must have believed that his nonconformity threatened the association's mission.[17]

During the period covered in this study, the Phi Beta Kappa's role as an undergraduate debating club diminished as it grew more and more dependent on outside approval. In the course of this transformation, the members not only sought to attract illustrious listeners to their festivities; they also needed to make an individual's attendance there essential to participation in the polite community. The attention given to the presence of women in the audience marked the tendency to regard them as arbiters of culture while discouraging them from scholarship. The following chapters describe the chronological stages of this transition within the Phi Beta Kappa.

In his answer to the indictments against his character, Bishop helped to put the confrontation in this context by dissociating himself from the prevailing elite.

> From this moment I cease to be a member of [the] privileged orders and join myself to the great community of unprivileged men, to whose emancipation from the tyranny of the 'friends of order' and from the arts of political delusion I shall always chearfully devote those talents, which were never made for literary societies.

In other words, he conceded that he did not belong in such an organization.[18]

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[17] Connecticutensis, Three Letters, p. 9.

[18] Bishop, Appendix, p. 107.

A consideration of this rupture in Bishop's relationship with the Phi Beta Kappa at Yale illuminates a basic problem of the early national period. By 1800 some educated Americans, not just in New Haven, were wielding intellectual categories as weapons in their battles over economic, political, and social transformations. Seeking a monopoly on the truth, they attributed fundamental conflicts over who should benefit from the development of the United States to their rivals' religious and philosophical doubts. In this vein, one of Bishop's detractors lumped together "unprincipled and abandoned Democrats, Deists, Atheists, Adulterers and profligate men."[19]

For Americans struggling to shape their country's growth, the Enlightenment offered an array of helpful categories. With assorted results, philosophers combined the deductive logic of mathematical demonstration with inductive reasoning from observed evidence. One formulation of eighteenth century thought emphasized the power of human reason. According to its proponents, anyone unencumbered by superstition could dispel the apparent chaos of empirical facts and discern the eternal, uniform laws governing the universe. By comparing the logical constructions of reason with data supplied by their senses, they expected to discover the natural order in ethics, politics, economics, religion, and art, as well as in physical phenomena.[20]

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[19] [Webster], Rod, p. 7; Daniel W. Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 132-33.

This rendition of Enlightenment philosophy suffered from a serious flaw, however. Skeptics like David Hume pointed out that it contradicted its own standards of proof. Only a belief in the agency of an all-wise creator guaranteed the correspondence between postulates of reason and the actual plan of nature. Other theorists attempted to circumvent this defect by striking a different balance between deduction and induction. They grounded the unity of nature on human experience and an inherent craving for predictability. For such empiricists, natural laws emerged from the consistencies of human desires, sentiments, habits, instincts, appetites, and passions. With the limited aid of reason, scientists would gradually broaden the boundaries of human knowledge, tentatively describing correlations among facts and frequently modifying them to account for new information.[21]

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[20] Carl L. Becker, The Declaration of Independence (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922), pp. 26, 36-62, and The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 49-70, 83-88; Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 5-8; Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 45, 72-75, 106-8; Russel B. Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1960), pp. 57-58; Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951); Alfred Cobban, In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960), p. 39.

[21] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History 24(1955):267-68; Theodore D. Bozeman, Protestants in an Age of Science (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 15-16, 67-68,

Even Hume maintained that no sane person's actions denied causation, the existence of matter, or the identity of self. But because no one could irrefutably demonstrate these primary axioms, he claimed, people accepted them from psychological necessity. Critics of this skepticism strove to expose its special menace for the unsophisticated. Devotees of such a philosophy, they feared, could become morally rudderless, unable to make responsible judgments in a tumultuous period. Other adherents, like Abraham Bishop, might form mental speculations encouraging more unsettling schemes. One of his antagonists explicitly connected "his wild reveries" with "motley and mongrel systems of government."[22]

70; Richard J. Petersen, "Scottish Common Sense in America, 1768-1850: An Evaluation of Its Influence" (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1963), p. 31; Donald H. Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), pp. 3-7; James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy (Hildesheim: Georg Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966; reprint from 1875 ed.), pp. 2-7, 99-102, 242-43; Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962; orig. ed. 1876), 1:264-90; Gladys Bryson, Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 17-29.

[22] Connecticutensis, Three Letters, p. 9; Howe, Unitarian Conscience, pp. 28-29, 127; Donald H. Meyer, The Instructed Conscience (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 37-38; Nicholas Phillipson, "The Export of Enlightenment," TLS, July 2, 1976, and "Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment," in City and Society in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Paul S. Fritz and David Williams (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), pp. 142-47; Gavin Ardley, "Hume's Common Sense Critics," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 30(1976):117-22; Richard H. Popkin, "Scepticism in the Enlightenment," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 26(1963):1321-45; George E. Davie, "Hume and the Origins of the Common Sense School," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 6(1952):218-21.

Backers of the dominant authorities supposed that they could curb disturbing tendencies by banning certain ideas. In 1825 a Phi Beta Kappa orator referred to these efforts to isolate a single hazardous strand in Enlightenment thought.

> It has been supposed, by many, that deep research, especially in physical and metaphysical science, or abstract learning, in general, has a tendency to promote scepticism, and free-thinking, and consequently, licentiousness in morals: And the names of Bolingbroke, Hume and Gibbon, Voltaire, Rosseau [sic], and others, are often pointed to, as beacons, to warn mankind of the dangers, which lurk, in the deep recesses of human learning.

In the associations where they exerted power, opponents of speculation tried to obtain ascendancy for their principles.[23]

As an alternative to skepticism, its foes urged a version of Scottish common sense philosophy. They recognized the futility of ignoring or prohibiting questions that engendered doubt. Instead they sought to substantiate the assumptions essential for scientific analysis. With a twist of terminology, American interpretors of Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart proclaimed the universal validity of these precepts, based on a capacity for expressing them in all languages and a consensus among civilized thinkers. Unfortunately they often placed their personal, historically relative prejudices on their lists of immutable propositions.[24]

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[23] James Gould, An Oration Pronounced at New-Haven, Before the Connecticut Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa Society (New Haven: T.G. Woodward & Co., 1825), p. 18. May, Enlightenment, pp. xv, 252-55, 337-38, 353.

[24] Ahlstrom, "Scottish Philosophy," pp. 257-72; Howe, Unitarian Conscience, pp. 29-31, 36-42, 47-48; May, Enlightenment, pp. 344-49; Meyer, Instructed Conscience, pp. 37-42,

IV

Advocates of common sense philosophy erred in correlating social and political choices with particular configurations of Enlightenment concepts. In fact, individuals with varying experiences employed elements of the available intellectual systems in ways that helped them deal with the conditions they were facing. Conflicts arose because Americans had to make decisions about the institutional arrangements regulating their lives. Within the constraints imposed by their circumstances, they were shaping the structures in which they were participating.

In eighteenth century New England, more and more towns engaged in increasingly complex trade networks. Even if they did not initiate these changes, families adapted the household mode of production to a developing market economy. Not everyone agreed about how to distribute the advantages and burdens of these transitions. In cooperation and in contention with each other, neighbors entered intense controversies about their society's future. Whether or not

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and *Democratic Enlightenment*, pp. 189-93; Bozeman, *Protestants*; Petersen, "Scottish Common Sense in America," pp. 3, 22, 34; Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), pp. 129-30, 153, 238-43; Sidney E. Mead, *Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858: A Connecticut Liberal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 63-64, 190; Bryson, *Man and Society*, pp. 134-35; McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 2, 4-6, 144-45, 159, 193, 208-9; S. A. Grave, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); Olin M. Jones, *Empiricism and Intuitionism in Reid's Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927); Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 85-88, 93-98.

they ever attended college, they labored to comprehend their situation and to devise tactics for coping with it. Each person marshalled into a unique pattern ideas shared with relatives, friends, business partners, representatives, and religious associates. With diverse degrees of success, these explanations provided guides to action for their designers.

Enlightenment philosophy allowed Americans to ascribe the confusing and divisive consequences of human volitions to the operation of natural laws. To them, the impersonal commercial relationships that replaced traditional connections seemed to manifest the rational universal order. Despite the bewildering appearance of events, these individuals tried to attune their behavior to the underlying harmony of the cosmos. If they could attain this powerful knowledge, they anticipated their triumph in a world governed by infallible rules. Disappointed competitors who accepted this ideology could attribute their failures either to their own mistakes in reasoning or to vestiges of superstition impeding nature's proper functioning.[25]

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[25] Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment, pp. 150-53; Allen O. Hansen, Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century (New York: MacMillan Co., 1926), pp. 10-12; Nicholas Phillipson, "Culture and Society in the Eighteenth Century Province: The Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment," in The University in Society, ed. Lawrence Stone, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 2:429-30; Lucien Goldmann, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment: The Christian Burgess and the Enlightenment, trans. Henry Maas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), pp. 17-18; R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: New American Library, 1954), pp. 150-53, 161-63, 208.

Both radical and conservative implications followed from the variations of Enlightenment doctrines. Ostensibly unfettered by custom, reformers at times attempted to speed up ongoing processes with deductions from reason. Conversely, less enthusiastic witnesses to eighteenth century transformations could legitimize their reluctance with an allusion to a supposed determinism in the unfolding natural order. Some innovators invoked self-evident truths, without regard for the logical compatibility between them, as a means of promoting historical change. Other empiricists, by appealing to the inexorability of facts, intended to check commercial expansion. Ultimately the philosophy sanctioned by Abraham Bishop's enemies proved as likely as any other to foster results they deplored.[26]

V

The Phi Beta Kappa orators scrutinized in this dissertation drew on a broad spectrum of Enlightenment ideas to support their views about American development. Whether they endorsed radical or conservative opinions seemed to depend less on the philosophy provided by their schooling than on the positions they created for themselves within the confines of social, economic, and political transitions. The information available suggests that the speakers' backgrounds and education did not determine the beliefs they expressed but it does make their choices understandable.

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[26] May, Enlightenment, p. xvi; Sloan, Scottish Enlightenment, pp. 238-45; Cobban, Humanity, p. 100; Bozeman, Protestants, pp. 62, 64; Francis L. Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics: The Curriculum of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1794," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 6(1949):67; Goldmann, Philosophy, pp. 29, 34-35, 56; M.F. Heiser, "The Decline of Neoclassicism, 1801-1848," in Transitions in American Literary History, ed. Harry H. Clark (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1953), p. 99; Howard Miller, The Revolutionary College (New York: New York University Press, 1976), pp. 276-77; Wilson Smith, Professors and Public Ethics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), pp. 38-40; Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 6-7, 40, 250; Heimert, Religion and the American Mind, pp. 17-21, 44, 242-46, 254-61; Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1978); Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 342; Becker, Heavenly City, pp. 96-103.

Relying on these Phi Beta Kappa orations as sources for interpretation does present some impediments. A search of college archives and major repositories produced only 83 of the 191 discourses delivered during the period through 1837. For the ones unearthed, the amount of biographical material about the speakers varied greatly from individual to individual. Even those with personal documents did not explicitly state why they treated particular themes.

The authors of the two earliest surviving speeches, analyzed in the first two chapters, preserved voluminous biographical records. The papers of Simeon Baldwin and John Q. Adams supply enough clues to explain how the sentiments they expounded in their addresses fit into the context of their lives. Baldwin disregarded rationalism's skeptical flaw in sweepingly optimistic predictions about the nation's expansion that matched his ascent into Connecticut's educated elite. Adams, on the other hand, painfully conscious of the exertions necessary to measure up to his father, emphasized the discrepancy between his mental constructions and reality's hindrances.

The next three chapters assess the eight orations delivered between 1789 and 1795. They exemplify the escalating discord among Americans regarding domestic growth and international entanglements. Although the speakers did not leave manuscripts illuminating their reasoning, they employed both deduction and induction in praising the French Revolution, condemning slavery, recommending commerce and industry, and stating their politics. The fifth chapter contains a tongue-in-cheek apology on duelling and a perfectly serious defense of animal rights. The latter represented the sort of extreme conclusions logically possible from enlightened premises that would later distress many college graduates.

The sixth chapter considers the four addresses from the last years of the eighteenth century. They indicate the efforts by some of the educated to damp down threatening tendencies with the intellectual instruments at their disposal. Again without extensive data on the orators' characters, the evidence substantiates the general hypothesis that the speakers organized the principles they had imbibed in a manner conformingto their special circumstances. The marked contrast between Abraham Bishop's discourse and the ones preceeding it clarify why his refusal to conform to the pattern of self-censorship evoked such a strong reaction.

Essentially, this dissertation concentrates on two themes. First, it proves that contrary to the assertions of Bishop's opponents, Phi Beta Kappa orators did take partisan stands on controversial issues. Furthermore, the material implies that the version of Enlightenment philosophy the speakers' adopted could not serve as a basis for predicting their responses to social and political questions. Although various configurations of ideas helped individuals contend with the unsettling transformations they were experiencing, neither their personal backgrounds nor the education they received caused them to make particular decisions.

CHAPTER ONE

"IN THIS ENLIGHTENED AGE...," 1782-87

In early September 1787, just as the national Constitutional Convention was ending, a young New Haven lawyer and Yale graduate, Simeon Baldwin, delivered an oration to the Yale Phi Beta Kappa chapter. This occasion, held on the day following the college commencement, marked the society's first celebration in Connecticut. The address has become the oldest example of the genre now preserved.

Baldwin's speech emphasized the possibilities for personal and social advancement implicit in Enlightenment philosophy, especially in its principles of education: "It is impossible to set bounds to the mind, it is capable of almost infinite progression in the road of improvement." His optimism about human perfectibility reflected his experiences during an "experimental" period of American history. Baldwin's abundant family papers revealed how his upward mobility combined with his perceptions of late eighteenth century transformations and the enlightened ideas he acquired as a student. These documents indicate the sources of his conviction that amelioration only required the initiative of individuals like himself.

> In this enlightened age, one would think that those happy youth, who have experienced the advantages of a good early education, and have the means of further improvement in their hands, would have sufficient information & inducement, to wake every lively passion, & stimulate the mind to the most Vigorous exertions.

Within the limits of prevailing conditions, including the varieties of philosophy available, Baldwin helped shape his country's development. In his Phi Beta Kappa oration, he urged members of his audience to promote intellectual and economic growth.[1]

Baldwin's address was not the first of it kind nationally. The Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard had sponsored annual anniversary orations since 1782. After the festivities that year, the society's president sent an account to his counterpart at Yale:

> We celebrated our anniversary in the Chapel with open doors: The students generally attended as well as some of the first characters of the State who were on business in the town. This circumstance seemed to give dignity to the society; as the greatest regularity was observed by the members. The students paid us the highest respect, standing in their places till we walked out in order.

The chapter records described the discourses from 1786 and 1787 as "elegant and spirited." Two of the early speakers examined friendship, and one discussed history. None of the texts have survived. Like Baldwin, these orators had all recently graduated from college. Three were preparing for careers in law, while four were candidates for the ministry. If they existed, the addresses of these aspiring professionals would probably represent the same factors as Baldwin's - biography, current events, and the intellectual framework provided by education[2]

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[1] Simeon Baldwin, "An Oration Pronounced at the Anniversary of the Day after Commencement 1787 - Before the Society of P.B.K. Convened at the State House in New Haven," in Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "PBK Register Book," pp. 31, 33, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT (hereafter YUA); Donald H. Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), pp. 3-12.

I

When Simeon Baldwin was born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1761, the town was undergoing the sorts of social and economic changes that would encourage Americans throughout the colonies to fight for independence from Britain. Norwich had become the center of commerce in eastern Connecticut, a region that had been expanding rapidly since the end of the seventeenth century. By 1761, however, other areas of the colony were growing even faster, and Norwich lost its rank as the town with the most taxable wealth. The inhabitants found that Norwich's developing market economy could provide opportunities to improve their fortunes or it could impose a prolonged struggle to make ends meet. Although historical circumstances limited their actions, colonists like the Baldwins had made the choices that transformed the town into a commercial center.[3]

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[2] See appendix for biographical data. Samuel Kendal to Henry T. Channing, October 16, 1782, YUA; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," September 5, 1786, September 5, 1787, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA; Oscar M. Voorhees, The History of Phi Beta Kappa (New York: Crown Publishers, 1945), pp. 43-45.

[3] James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815 (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), pp. 25-26; Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1967), pp. 122-23; J. E.

Fourteen miles upriver from the coast, Norwich connected the eastern Connecticut hinterlands to the intercolonial trade. Its merchants exchanged farm commodities, including grain, livestock and lumber, for cash and molasses from the West Indies. They also used this produce, in combination with molasses, specie and credit, to acquire European manufactured goods. Substantial Norwich families undertook some of Connecticut's earliest manufacturing enterprises. Town traders fostered connections with backcountry farmers who still produced more for local consumption than for the market. Families in villages began to exchange some of their commodities for goods they had previously furnished for themselves or done without. While rural artisans continued to combine their handicrafts with farming, those in Norwich convinced their neighbors to utilize their special skills and to demand services and wares once considered luxuries. Some families added the labor of slaves to their economic resources. On the comparatively self-sufficient backcountry farms, family members - women, children and the aged, as well as fathers and maturing sons - divided the work of a precapitalist household economy among themselves. In Norwich developing trade patterns engendered more and more specialized divisions of labor

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Crowley, This Sheba Self: The Conceptualization of Economic Life in Eighteenth Century America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 33, 77; Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 15 vols. (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1850-90), 11:573.

between households.[4]

The dynamism of eastern Connecticut's economy provided a certain prosperity for at least some of its inhabitants, especially when the colonial wars stimulated trade. At the same time, however, Americans realized that expansion had some disturbing consequences. Three phenomena in particular demonstrated the mixed blessings that Norwich's commercial growth brought to families like the Baldwins - credit problems, land shortages, and religious heterogeneity.

Colonists had extended their trade faster than Connecticut's supply of specie. They adapted for the market their customary practice of combining cash and barter in exchanging goods and services. They would eventually settle their book debts by transfers of commodities assigned cash values, keeping to a minimum their need for currency. Advocates of paper money thought they could ease debtors' predicaments while supporting developing enterprises. They discovered, however, that they created more controversies about speculation and devaluation. Entangled in elaborate credit relationships complicated by uncertain currency policies, many colonists had trouble discerning the fine line between wise investments and disastrous gambles.[5]

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[4] Frances M. Caulkins, History of Norwich, Connecticut (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Co., 1866), pp. 308-14, 325-35; Bushman, Puritan to Yankee, chap. 7; Bruce C. Daniels, The Connecticut Town: Growth and Development, 1635-1790 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), pp. 146-51; Gaspare J. Saladino, "The Economic Revolution in Late Eighteenth Century Connecticut," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964), pp. 2, 6-7, 14-17; Christopher Collier, Roger Sherman's Connecticut: Yankee Politics and the American Revolution (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), p. 29; Michael Merrill, "Cash Is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States," Radical History Review, no. 4(1976), pp. 53-63; Christopher Clark, "The Household Mode of Production-A Comment," Radical History Review, no. 18(1978), pp. 166-71, and "Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," Journal of Social History 13(1979):172-7; Robert E. Mutch, "Yeoman and Merchant in Pre-Industrial America," Societas 7(1977):279-302; Robert A. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), chap. 1; Margaret E. Martin, Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley, 1750-1820, Smith College Studies in History, vol. 24 (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938-39), pp. 4-7; Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution," Journal of Social History 6(1973):403-39; Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 22; Joan Hoff Wilson, "The Illusion of Change: Women and the American Revolution," in The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism, ed. Alfred F. Young (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), pp. 381-445.

Land shortages resulted as eastern Connecticut's population increased. Higher prices delighted owners of large tracts of previously uncultivated land, but colonists with little property and many children found they could no longer divide their holdings among all their descendents. Some urged their offspring to apply themselves to occupations other than farming. Others who saw the solution to inheritance problems in western lands formed the Susquehanna and Delaware Companies to obtain them. The investors could relieve their families' land shortages by prodding their own children to emigrate or by using income from company shares to establish them closer to home. The activities of the land companies generated further rifts in Connecticut politics about the wisdom of engaging in border disputes.[6]

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[5] Bushman, Puritan to Yankee, pp. 128-31; Collier, Roger Sherman's Connecticut, pp. 16-9; Merrill, "Cash Is Good to Eat," pp. 53-63; Clark, "Household Economy," pp. 172-7; Mutch, "Yeoman and Merchant," pp. 279-302; Joseph Ernst, "'Ideology' and an Economic Interpretation of the Revolution," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 159-85.

During the Great Awakening, many New Lights underwent conversion experiences that helped them mitigate anxieties engendered by Connecticut's transformations. In reinvigorating piety, however, they condemned religious authorities who did not support their standards of spirituality. Their attempts to organize new communities of like-minded believers contributed to social tensions rather than alleviating them. Old Lights aggravated the distressing effects of the revival by insisting that only decorum and settled institutions would preserve religious harmony. In Norwich, dissatisfied parishioners initiated separatist meetings. Their efforts to avoid paying taxes for the support of the regular minister produced "violent commotions" when civil authorities, backed by the Connecticut legislature, resorted to arrests and property seizures. Even after the revival subsided, the divisions it caused persisted in legislative alignments and in more heterogeneous religious institutions.[7]

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[6] Bushman, Puritan to Yankee, pp. 256-59; Collier, Roger Sherman's Connecticut, pp. 37-40; Saladino, "Economic Revolution," pp. 29-30; Julian P. Boyd, ed., Introduction to The Susquehannah Company Papers, 11 vols. (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Wyoming Historical & Geological Society, 1930-71), 1:ix-lxxxix; James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 35(1978):27-8.

[7] Bushman, Puritan to Yankee, pp. 187-95, 222-24; Caulkins, Norwich, pp. 315-24; J.M. Bumstead, "Revivalism

The diverse aspects of Enlightenment philosophy helped colonists like the Baldwins grapple with the problems accompanying eastern Connecticut's social and economic development. When Norwich's inhabitants differentiated their production and trade patterns, they could view the resulting disorder and turmoil as evidence of the still incomplete realization of natural laws. Partisans in Connecticut's controversies over credit, land shortages, and religion supported radical, moderate, and conservative positions with arguments drawn from both rationalist and empiricist thought.

The conflicts which attended Norwich's growth affected the decisions made by colonists like the Baldwins, who were trying to distribute the family's resources in a manner calculated to provide security for all its members. Connecticut's development simultaneously multiplied the possibilities open to young adults and undermined parents' abilities to guarantee their children's futures. Traditionally, Americans had designated youth as a "chusing time." Maturing

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and Separatism in New England: The First Society of Norwich, Connecticut, as a Case Study," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 24(1967):588-612; William G. McLoughlin, Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), pp. 9-23, 27-30; Edwin S. Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957); Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pt. 1; Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 42-61; Howard Miller, The Revolutionary College (New York: New York University Press, 1976), pp. 32, 55-56; Rhys Isaac, "Preachers and Patriots: Popular Culture and the Revolution in Virginia," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 137-40.

individuals selected among the occupational options available to them within the existing social and economic structures while internalizing the values that reinforced these conditions. During the years of Connecticut's expansion, young colonists assumed more of the responsibilities for analyzing their opportunities within the constraints imposed by ongoing changes. Parents, less able to provide for their heirs, lost much of their power to direct their offspring's adult lives. Many gratefully unburdened themselves of these duties, while others had to concede defeat when challenged by their children. Young adults had more options to choose from, but they also had to learn to take into account the increasing importance of complex commercial exchanges.[8]

Before Simeon was born in 1761, the Baldwins had arranged various means for his five older brothers and sisters to avoid the hardships besetting many families. Writing soon after Simeon's birth and their mother's ensuing death, the oldest brother - Ebenezer - then a student at Yale, evaluated the family's situation for his sister Bethiah: "We seem to be placed in a Middle State, Below the Reach of Envy, & above the Fears of Poverty." In a college class ranked by social status, Ebenezer stood thirty out of forty-two. Their father had held several local offices and was a captain in the Connecticut militia. Although descended from original proprietors, the Baldwins did not own enough land in Norwich to divide profitably among all the children. As early as 1754 they began to invest in the land companies that were acquiring western territories for cultivation and speculation. As Ebenezer noted, his family could start him on his career but without the ease of some of his Yale classmates.[9]

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[8] Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace, "The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation," Perspectives in American History 6(1972):259-67; Ross W. Beales, Jr., "In Search of the Historical Child: Miniature Adulthood and Youth in Colonial New England," American Quarterly 27(1975):379-98; N. Roy Hiner, "Adolescence in Eighteenth-Century America," History of Childhood Quarterly 3(1975):253-80.

Simeon's birth occurred about the time that the beneficial economic effects of the French and Indian War ended in Norwich. Postwar difficulties embroiled many colonists in intensifying strife. With a new family member to provide for, these circumstances reinforced the Baldwin's New Light desires to have Simeon's oldest brother become a minister. When Ebenezer expressed doubts about his calling before his graduation from college in 1763, his father invoked the evangelical context in which Simeon grew up:

> Now I have bin at so much cost and dun so much to fit you for gods service god will sertinly doe all on his part Therefore nothing is wanting but on your part if you except of Christ as oford in the gospel he will lead you in all truth and teach you all things. Now it is at your choice therefore chuse Christ.

After experimenting with more scholarly vocations at an academy in western Massachusetts and as a tutor at Yale, in 1770 Ebenezer finally accepted a parish in Danbury, a region expanding faster than Norwich. A few years later, he began preparing Simeon for college.[10]

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[9] Simeon E. Baldwin, Life and Letters of Simeon Baldwin (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Co., n.d.), pp. 1-5, 13-14; Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 6 vols. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1903-12), 3:4-8; Caulkins, Norwich, p. 163; Boyd, ed., Susquehanna Company Papers, 1:19, 169, 177, 262, 266, 310.

The effect of Connecticut's credit and money problems on the Baldwins meant that they could more easily support family members living away from home with goods or services than with cash. Although they had the basic provisions needed to subsist and maintained credit within the complex web of book debts, they had to contend with the tight money supply. Captain Baldwin concluded his comments on Ebenezer's religious doubts with a financial statement: "As to money I no not what to doe for I can not git anouf to pay my Rate." Sometimes to settle term bills at Yale, family members called in long-standing barter transactions showing balances in their favor.[11]

With Ebenezer using his education in a profession that implemented their religious commitment, the Baldwins assigned to Oliver, the second son, the task of managing the family holdings in Norwich. Simeon's father, like many farmers and rural artisans, combined working the land with practicing the craft of a blacksmith. While others in Norwich began to specialize, he continued in the amalgamation of skills typical of the precapitalist household mode of production. Eventually, Oliver took over both these means of livelihood. The family may have regretted its choice in his case, because he proved unfit for managing finances during a period of economic turmoil.[12]

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[10] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 1-3; Ebenezer Baldwin (father) to Ebenezer Baldwin (brother), May 24, 1763, Baldwin Family Papers, Yale University Library; Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 3:4-8; William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 9 vols. (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1859-63), 1:635-40; Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750-1850 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), pp. 7-8; Saladino, "Economic Revolution," pp. 7-9.

[11] Ebenezer Baldwin (father) to Ebenezer Baldwin (brother), May 24, 1763; Merrill, "Cash Is Good to Eat," pp. 53-63; Mutch, "Yeoman and Merchant," p. 282.

Simeon's three sisters - Rhoda, Bethiah, and Mary - contributed their labor to the household while living at home. While their prospects of marriage depended on a portion of the family's resources, their husbands would furnish connections within the local social and economic networks. The oldest sister married before Simeon was born, and her husband took an important role in the Baldwin's business affairs, compensating for some of Oliver's failings. Bethiah remained single, perhaps because when she was most interested in finding a husband, the family could not produce a dowry or spare her from home. The youngest sister married a schoolteacher after Simeon left college. She and Bethiah in particular helped their brothers at Yale, taking the time to write them letters and to make and remake clothes for them.[13]

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[12] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 1, 6, 12-14, 16; Jacob Witter to Simeon Baldwin, August 14, 1786, Baldwin Family Papers.

[13] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 4-9; Charles C. Baldwin, Baldwin Geneology, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Leader Printing Co., 1881), 1:261; Barbara E. Lacey, "Women in the Era of the

Once his eldest brother became a minister and the second took responsibility for the family businesses, Simeon's position as third son meant more control over his own future. But he had to reckon with a war which drastically altered the Baldwins' previous arrangements for distributing the family assets. During his youth, the British government formulated a number of measures to regulate the colonies. The Baldwins and many other colonists wrestling with eighteenth century transformations interpreted these policies as grievances. Simeon's experiences of the War for Independence shaped his views of college education and the careers possible for young graduates.

In 1774 Ebenezer Baldwin published a tract which illustrated how particular British policies appeared in the context of his family's situation. He enumerated specific instances of English injustice - from the Stamp Act and writs of assistance to the latest incidents precipitated by the presence of an army administering the Coercive Acts. Almost any colonist could find on his list reasons for explaining the problems that accompanied American development as offenses by English authorities and their colonial agents. Considering all these grievances together, Ebenezer Baldwin declared that the new taxes and regulations, enforced by a standing army, constituted a terrifying con-

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American Revolution: The Case of Norwich, Connecticut," New England Quarterly 53(1980):527-43. See also Simeon Baldwin's correspondence with his sisters Bethiah and Mary, Baldwin Family Papers.

spiracy: "If we view the whole of the conduct of the ministry and parliament, I do not see how any one can doubt but that there is a settled fix'd plan for enslaving the colonies, or bringing them under arbitrary government, and indeed the nation too." He urged Americans to oppose this plot and to unite in support of the Continental Congress's proposals. He proved his dedication to these sentiments by briefly serving as a chaplain with the militia defending New York before dying of camp fever in 1776.[14]

In part, the War for Independence represented the efforts of American colonists like the Baldwins to resolve the conflicts created by the emerging market economy. They fought for independence from England because so many of them, in diverse situations, saw colonial status as the source of their particular misfortunes. When British interests demanded tighter controls over the colonies, many Americans subject to the pressures of expansion insisted on a greater degree of self-determination. Some colonists who favored and others who condemned the changes they were experiencing agreed that Americans themselves should prescribe the extent and direction of further development. Colonists who objected to British rule for a variety of reasons submerged the incompatible additional goals they hoped to gain after the war in order to attain independence.

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[14] Ebenezer Baldwin, Appendix to A Sermon, Containing Scriptural Instructions to Civil Rulers, and All Free-Born Subjects, by Samuel Sherwood (New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1774), p. 67, and The Duty of Rejoicing Under Calamities and Afflictions, Considered and Improved in a Sermon, Preached at Danbury, November 16, 1775 (New York: Hugh Gaine, 1776); Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 129-30; Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 3:4-8; S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 3.

Despite widespread dissatisfaction with British policies, only a multitude of agonizing personal decisions by individual Americans like the members of the Baldwin family produced a war for independence. Activists cooperated in strenuous agitation for their cause in more areas of the colonies than the British army could control at once. They attempted to convince potential dissidents to keep their opinions to themselves or to move elsewhere. In their exertions to fuse Americans into a united opposition, colonial partisans availed themselves of the power of a persuasive rhetoric that appealed to diverse sorts of colonists. But Americans demonstrated again and again the fragility of their ideological and organizational unity. Although in resisting the English government many colonists attributed the difficulties they encountered to their place in the British empire, in fact their troubles did not derive solely from that cause. Independence, therefore, did not resolve the differences suggested by the contradictory logical implications of their polemics. The ways the war affected the Baldwin family illustrated its failure to reconcile the tensions created by American development.[15]

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[15] Ebenezer Baldwin, Appendix; Staughton Lynd, Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States Constitution (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1967), pp. 11-15; Burrows and Wallace, "American Revolution," pp. 287-88; Henretta, American Society, pp. 146-47; Gordon S. Wood, Creation of the

Before the war, the Baldwins had been striving to provide secure futures for all the family members, despite their limited resources and the disruptive consequences of colonial expansion. In 1773, when he was eleven, Simeon had begun his preparations for college under the guidance of his oldest brother in Danbury. When Ebenezer left to serve with the army, Simeon continued his studies with teachers who did not belong to the Baldwin family. Had Ebenezer lived, he probably would have helped to pay his youngest brother's expenses at Yale. Instead he left a small estate, part of which the Baldwins used for Simeon's education.[16]

Wartime inflation soon diminished Ebenezer's bequest, however, and Simeon came to resent the additional constraints that Oliver's financial miscalculations put on his opportunities for support from the family. In return, Oliver seemed to envy Simeon and chafed under the burden of trying to preserve the Baldwin assets during the economic crises of the War for Independence. Simeon claimed that his

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American Republic (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), pt. 1; Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment, pp. 104-7; May, Enlightenment, pp. 91-94; Bailyn, Ideological Origins; Heimert, Religion and the American Mind, pp. 387-486; Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 24(1967):3-20; Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. xvii, xx; Edward Countryman, A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pts. 1-2; Marc Egnal and Joseph A. Ernst, "An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 29(1972):3-32; Ernst, "'Ideology,'" pp. 159-85.

[16] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 3, 15-16.

family's sacrifices and his disputes with Oliver spurred him on at college. As a senior, he wrote to Bethiah:

> The thought of these things has ever urged me on to obtain a good Education though I know it has cost my father much trouble & expence; though I know it has not been so much to my advantage as it would have been, had he been better able to discharge the expence necessarily attending it.

Although Simeon indicated his gratitude to his family for giving him a college education, he also noted how the Baldwins' limited resources confined his career choices at the same time that social and economic discord was making the decisions of youth more complicated.[17]

II

In 1777, the year Ezra Stiles agreed to become president of the college, Simeon Baldwin entered Yale. There he elaborated the philosophical outlook underpinning his perception of the times as "this enlightened age." In the textbooks and lectures required by Stiles and in supplementary reading for exhibitions and debates, Baldwin acquainted himself with intellectual structures that seemed to explain the transformations he had experienced at Norwich. Within the confines of the categories at hand, he maintained his own perspective in the contests raging at Yale about what students would learn.

Viewing his education as his portion of the family resources, Baldwin sought from it the means to start a career amidst social and economic change. To a friend from

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[17] Ibid., p. 6.

Norwich who did not go to college, he wrote that after Yale he expected "to exhibit a part with a respectable appearance upon the Stage of the World." As president, Ezra Stiles too wanted a Yale education to prepare young Americans to deal with eighteenth century developments. Despite disruptions caused by the war, he began instituting reforms designed to encourage undergraduates to examine Enlightenment ideas and recent scientific theories. Without offending the clergy who officially governed Yale, Stiles served the needs and desires of students like Baldwin. When Simeon mentioned "that true Politeness founded on the permanent Basis of Literature," he was alluding to his obsession with cultural refinements. Stiles, on the other hand, put his emphasis on the sound learning that comprised the second phrase in this dictum.[18]

While Baldwin was an undergraduate, Yale had four basic methods of instruction, conveying in various ways the ideas and values of the Enlightenment. Stiles balanced the rigorous discipline of textbook recitations with the controlled self-government permitted in extracurricular activities. He supplemented the students' passive absorption of information from lectures with creative efforts during literary exercises. Within the limits set by college regulations, motivated undergraduates like Baldwin could shape their education in the direction they thought most beneficial. How much of the prescribed knowledge they actually learned depended both on the abilities of the teachers and on the students' cooperation. During Baldwin's years at Yale, Americans influencing college education had to evince more than the usual commitment and flexibility because of the dislocations resulting from the War for Independence.[19]

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[18] Simeon Baldwin to George Hough, June 14, 1780, Baldwin Family Papers; Edmund S. Morgan, The Gentle Puritan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 321-23; Phyllis V. Erenberg, "Change and Continuity: Values in American Higher Education, 1750-1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974), p. 30.

The fundamental subjects which all undergraduates supposedly mastered formed the core of the Yale curriculum. As a freshman, Baldwin studied Latin, Greek and arithmetic. Later he moved on to advanced levels of mathematics, logic, geography, English grammar, rhetoric, natural philosophy, divinity, ethics, and metaphysics. In the first three years, students demonstrated their comprehension of assigned textbooks to their class tutor, who could encourage a particular reading of the material. Seniors continued this method of instruction with the college president. In their texts, which included Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Baldwin and his classmates encountered diverse versions of Enlightenment ideas. From recitations, students theoretically gained a sense of discipline while ingesting the content of the required subjects. Other than concern for their reputations and respect for their tutors, however, undergraduates had few immediate incentives for improving their performances. For students like Simeon Baldwin to apply themselves to the assigned texts, they had to realize that their efforts would somehow promote their future prospects in life.[20]

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[19] S. E. Baldwin, *Life*, pp. 18-23; Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, pp. 329-36; Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 459; Carl A. Hangartener, "Movements to Change American College Teaching, 1700-1830" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1955), pp. 239-41, 289-90, 307.

In order to place their recitation subjects in a broader intellectual context, Yale undergraduates needed assistance from the lectures they attended. Besides holding the professorship of ecclesiastical history, Stiles was doing most of the lecturing himself by the time Baldwin graduated. The president had to wait until after the war to replace the professors in divinity and natural philosophy, substituting for the incumbents when they could not perform their duties. Drawing on his own struggles with contradictory tendencies in eighteenth century philosophy, Stiles construed his extra responsibilities as opportunities to help his students formulate their own enlightened concepts. Two or three times a week he lectured on religious topics, communicating his moderate views on church history and theology. Frequently he discussed recent scientific discoveries and enlarged the college's collection of equipment for replicating experiments. In other lectures he introduced topics not included in the textbooks and made the curriculum more coherent. Reluctant to impose his versions of Enlightenment ideas on his listeners, Stiles expected them to use the information in constructing suitable interpretations for themselves.[21]

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[20] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 22-23; Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 382-92; Louis F. Snow, The College Curriculum in the United States (New York: Teachers College, 1907), pp. 79, 90; John C. Schwab, "The Yale College Curriculum, 1701-1901," Educational Review 22(1901):3-7; Hangartener, "College Teaching," p. 7.

In literary exercises, Yale students applied the enlightened knowledge they had assimilated in arguing assigned positions on controversial issues. Organizing their own persuasive combinations of rationalism and empiricism, Baldwin and his classmates prepared disputations and declamations on such current subjects as lotteries, plays, marriage, standing armies, and the advantages of commerce over agriculture. Choosing among the opposing implications of Enlightenment ideas, they offered answers to topical questions in ethics, law, science, and religion:

> Whether Man's own happiness is the ultimate end of Action....
> Whether the Planetary Orbs are inhabited....
> Whether the Punishment of the Damned be Eternal....
> Whether Polygamy be Lawfull....
> Whether the immortality of the Soul can be proved from Reason.

To analyze these problems, students had to extend their reading and consider differing opinions. Through their self-initiated explorations, they could expand the appointed lessons to include their personal interests - like Baldwin's pursuit of polite culture.[22]

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[21] Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 320-24, 337, 339-41, 376-82; Hangartener, "College Teaching," pp. 7-8.

[22] Simeon Baldwin, "Baldwin's Arcanum, 1779," Baldwin Family Papers; Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 394-99; David

Preoccupied with cosmopolitanism as a means of advancing himself in a changing society, Baldwin appreciated the importance of literary drills. Speaking on "the Beauties of Nature" at his sophomore quarter day, he attributed to these skills a crucial role in converting his enlightened learning into success with the people who mattered:

> By these means we may attain that easiness of Address which is necessary for the communication of what we have acquired by study, in such an agreeable manner to the world, as to gain their notice & attention, & so captivate their affections as to facilitate our usefulness among them.

Baldwin's performance on that occasion marked his scholastic achievement, because selection for parts at public exhibitions served as an academic honor. He also presented the Latin salutatory oration at his commencement in 1781. While such rewards inspired undergraduates in their studies more than fear of possible punishments could, they also established limits to the views expressed in private exercises. Although they could stretch the boundaries of the Yale curriculum to include an emphasis on refinement which Stiles only reluctantly sanctioned, students with unacceptable opinions would never gain the platform where the college demonstrated to the community how well it discharged its socializing functions.[23]

Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges: An Historical Survey, 1642 to 1900 (New York: Teachers College, 1944).

[23] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 57, 72; Simeon Baldwin, "The Beauties of Nature," June 16, 1779, Baldwin Family Papers; Morgan, Gentle Puritan, p. 399; Potter, Debating.

In extracurricular activites Yale undergraduates could test against reality the theories they constructed in their other lessons. Subject to college regulations whether on or off campus, students practiced their capacities for self-government through social events and informal organizations like literary societies. Baldwin participated in meetings of the Phi Beta Kappa and the Brothers in Unity, serving as the latter's president in his senior year. There he debated such controversial topics as the redemption of continental currency, the French alliance, the election of members of Congress, and the proposed peace treaty.[24]

In his spare time, Baldwin cultivated elegance in letter writing, ingratiated himself with young women at dances and other gatherings, and perused books not included in his required reading, like Chesterfield's advice to would-be courtiers. Dreading the "Scholastic rust" that adhered to unpolished pedants, Baldwin expected nonacademic experiences to complete his education: "The basis or foundation of the Arts & Sciences must be laid at College & afterwards a superstructure built upon it from an acquaintance with mankind, & from conversation with refined company." Not until he left Yale, however, could he ascertain the value of his preparations in contending with a changing world.[25]

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[24] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 58-69; Potter, Debating; James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules: American Student Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century," in The University in Society, ed. Lawrence Stone, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 2:449-94; Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 56; Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 365-66.

III

Through his quest for sophistication, Simeon Baldwin acknowledged that a college degree alone could not catapult a member of a hardpressed family of farmers and blacksmiths into Connecticut's elite. To secure a place in these ranks for himself, he had to utilize the opportunities Yale offered for combining enlightened knowledge with capital and connections obtained through friendship, employment and eventually marriage. After his freshman year, worried about the strain his education put on his family's resources, Baldwin realized that for him college provided the best access to the new nation's highest circles. In a letter to a friend, he assessed his other options. He despised the farmer's life. Wartime financing made the army an uncertain livelihood. Few schoolteachers stayed on permanently, and their salaries increased with their education. Privateers and merchants could make fortunes quickly but they needed more connections and capital than the Baldwins had available. Therefore, he decided to finish Yale, supplementing family aid with college employment and a teaching position in New Haven.[26]

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[25] Simeon Baldwin to George Hough, June 14, 1780, and "Beauties of Nature," Baldwin Family Papers.

[26] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 27-29, 70-71; Collier, Roger Sherman's Connecticut, p. 11; Saladino, "Economic Revolution," pp. 119, 121; Scott, Office to Profession, pp. 39-40; Harry W. Chotiner, "The Aristocracy of Virtue: The American Ruling Class, 1783-1801" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Santa Cruz, 1975), p. 102; Martin,

When Baldwin graduated in 1781, he had not yet chosen a career. He craved a refined environment more than power, wealth or a traditional vocation. Because his family could not defray his expenses any longer, Baldwin sought a relatively painless path to the financial means that would allow him to pursue a life of letters. He wanted to enjoy the company of educated Americans who shared his Enlightenment ideas and polite tastes.[27]

For almost a year after his graduation he remained in New Haven, hesitant whether to succumb to family pressure to assume his brother's calling as a minister or to enter the legal profession, which he found dull. Meanwhile, he taught school and continued to polish his manners through social activities. Following his father's advice, he refused an ample salary at a school in Norwich so he could improve his status in the relatively cosmopolitan atmosphere near Yale. A former classmate sketched the attractions of Baldwin's situation: "Secluded from the envy, malice, hatred, & the quarrelsom dispositions of the illiterate populace, you have no trouble, nothing to do only attend upon the Levee of the Muses." There he counteracted the stifling "rust" that for him signified the "rustic" provinciality he was striving to shed. To bolster his advantages, he forged ties with two increasingly important New Haven families, studying law with

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Merchants and Trade, pp. 102-4.

[27] S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 28; Wood, American Republic, pp. 478-80.

Charles Chauncey and courting one (or possibly two) of Roger Sherman's daughters.[28]

To facilitate his entry into Connecticut's postwar elite, Baldwin sought a wife who not only had influential relatives but who also excelled in a polite learning that complemented his own. He expected women of refinement to improve men, removing any "rust" that marked the unsophisticated: "Certainly it is not untill after we are polished by the soft hands of the fair that we are the most acceptable even to our own Companions." His attitude reflected the changing relationships between men and women that accompanied the social and economic transformations of the time. While Americans retained the household mode of production, with its local trade networks, the functions family members performed remained generally undifferentiated from one farm to another. As Connecticut households began to specialize for larger, more complex markets, women as well as men took responsibility for somewhat different tasks than they had before, depending on their place within the economic system. In the station to which Baldwin aspired, females had exchanged some of their productive duties for primary responsibility in maintaining standards of gentility. Male heads of households strove to extend their families' prerogatives politically and economically, while their wives and daughters struggled in the cultural realm to secure these positions. With other women of a similar status, they consolidated the elite's power.[29]

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[28] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 42-43, 76-80, 85; Simeon Breed to Simeon Baldwin, April 2, 1782, Timothy Langdon to Simeon Baldwin, March 2, 1782, Bethiah Baldwin to Simeon Baldwin, April 1, 1782, and Simeon Baldwin to Benjamin Isaacs, October 22, 1782, Baldwin Family Papers; Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), p. 170.

Americans who, like Simeon Baldwin, were relying on the Enlightenment to ease the transitions from the household mode of production to the market economy applied these ideas to women's changing roles. In this instance, as in many other late eighteenth century controversies, proponents of opposing positions drew their arguments from variants of enlightened philosophy without recognizing the contradictory implications of their logic. A few concluded that women, as human beings governed by universal natural laws, deserved equal rights and access to economic power, politics and educational institutions like Yale. Others, ready to fortify the social structures dominant after the war, refused to subject new distributions of power to the further modifications necessary to make their principles rationally consistent. Instead, by disqualifying whole categories of Americans, theorists reinforced the limitations demanded by an increasingly commercial mode of production on competition from women, blacks, Indians, and other individuals lacking the requisite resources and attitudes. Trying to define these restrictions in terms of the Enlightenment, apologists declared that the empirical condition of these groups prevented them from manifesting the scientific calculations and constant habits that enabled some white males to establish the laws of nature. Only the latter met their specifications for free and equal individuals capable of competing and cooperating with other independent agents in postwar political and economic conflicts. Subordinate family members could exert pressure on the household head who represented them in these arenas to use his power in a particular way. A confined sphere, however, limited their privileges of self-determination. Expecting to advance himself by enlightened methods, Simeon Baldwin accepted the roles for women prescribed in this second configuration of ideas.[30]

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[29] S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 260; Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, pp. 5-10, 20-26, 40, 46, 51-62; Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America, 2nd ed. (New York: New Viewpoints, 1979), chap. 2; Margaret George, "From 'Goodwife' to 'Mistress,'" Science and Society 37(1973):155.

Baldwin sought contacts with women who would contribute to the cultivation he needed for gaining and maintaining membership in Connecticut's elite. As an undergraduate he entered New Haven's social circles by calling at the homes of President Stiles and leading citizens associated with Yale. Their daughters, along with friends and relatives, welcomed opportunities to entertain promising young Americans. Thus Baldwin met the two Sherman sisters, both of whom he would eventually marry, uniting with the second after his first wife died.[31]

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[30] Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, pp. 199-203; Wilson, "Illusion of Change"; Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1978), chaps. 14-15; Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Kathryn K. Sklar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), p. 137; Henretta, American Society, pp. 171-74. To compare the situation of women to that of blacks in the era of American independence, see Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 349-82.

In 1786 he wrote Rebecca, then his fiancee, a purportedly flattering letter in which he outlined his notion of the ideal relationship between husband and wife. He designated hers "that Sex which is calculated on purpose to happyfy ours." Baldwin compared "the softness the Delicacy & the pure friendship" of females to male "Moroseness - bluntness & &cs of disagreeableness." Because women innately had more refined temperaments, he supposed, they could not execute the arduous tasks by which men controlled society - "the pursuit of laudable attainments, & the Business, peculiar to, & proper for, the hardiness of Man."[32]

Baldwin encouraged his future wife to relinquish any claims to equal power and to depend on the force of influence in convincing men to make decisions coinciding with female interests.

> They must learn the strings by which Delila like, they can lead about & controul the morose Samsons of America - can soften their Rage - inspire them with Courage or reanimate their drooping Spirits, when dull by the fatigues of the Day....In short, they can lead the Man - by their enchanting power, whom the priest tells them in accents of Thunder they must obey - to those requests which it would be their Interest - their wish & their happiness to comply with & obey.

He congratulated women for their recent progress in education, demonstrating that they were not mere "Cyphers in Creation" but "one half of the noblest part." This education, designed to preserve the elite's hegemony through its female members' cultural activities, crowned the advantages Baldwin hoped to obtain by marrying into a genteel family.[33]

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[31] S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 480.

[32] Ibid., pp. 260-61.

In the summer of 1782, Baldwin accepted a position at the academy in Albany, New York. Although he risked losing his New Haven connections by this move, the societal patterns there offered a college graduate opportunities unavailable in Connecticut, where professional competition was intensifying. With Ezra Stiles's advice, Albany alderman Peter W. Yates hired Baldwin and another former Yale student whose cultural attributes could strengthen his party's challenges to the dominant Dutch. Committed to New England standards, these teachers could enhance the Yates faction's political strategies for creating alternatives to entrenched traditions. Assuming that the methods for impressing New Haven's elite had universal validity, Baldwin attacked ascribed status in Albany and advocated the legitimacy of acquired learning as a means of advancement. In an address to the academy, he summarized the criteria determining social rank by which he had improved himself in Connecticut:

> Education...gives you even in childhood a superiority over those of your age who are still bedarkened with native ignorance - ...it is the road to usefulness, will lead you to Eminance & in the End exalt the Dignity of your Nature....The Muses are not respecters of persons - all are welcome to the choice prizes of her bounty & it is assiduity alone that they reward with the Blessing of merit.

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[33] Ibid., pp. 260-61; Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, pp. 105-25.

By promoting Albany's changes, everyone supporting the Yates interests would share in the rewards when the group came to power.[34]

When he transferred his New Haven tactics to Albany, however, Baldwin revealed a weakness in his Enlightenment ideology. According to the ideas respected at Yale, natural laws not only had universal validity but also appeared self-evident once introduced to any rational individual. Therefore, he attributed Dutch social structures to intellectual causes - deficiencies in the educational system. In these terms he explained New York's inequality to a former classmate, James Kent, who was beginning a law career in Poughkeepsie.

> In this State you have a greater subordination & greater distance between the Orders of the people - ...for the body of the people are extremely Ignorant, while a few Individuals, by the blessing of an early Education, have acquired wealth & importance both from the Necessities & Ignorance of those beneath them.

Drawing on an intellectual background similar to Baldwin's, Kent defended his state on the grounds that higher education ought not to expand until social and economic stratification had stabilized people's expectations. Until the nation had matured sufficiently to support a leisured class consisting of "idle votaries of aerial speculations," he asserted, Connecticut's surplus of college graduates unable to enter the professions could produce "Idleness, Venality, & Corruption" by refusing lesser employments. Reversing this logic, Baldwin maintained that Americans' provincial simplicity - "the untainted Virtue of our infant Republic" - would allow them to construct sound institutional structures on the basis of their enlightened accomplishments. Because his individual intellectual attainments brought him success in Connecticut, Baldwin would not unite with the Yates political campaign in order to establish in Albany the New England norms that he considered self-evident laws of nature.[35]

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[34] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 86-87, 158-59; Lynd, Class Conflict, pp. 218-21; Alice P. Kenney, The Gansevoorts of Albany: Dutch Patricians in the Upper Hudson Valley (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), pp. 84-88, 108-10, 129-30, 153; Countryman, People in Revolution, chap. 8; Simeon Baldwin, "Farewell to the Albany Academy," September 24, 1783, Baldwin Family Papers.

Even though the Dutch elite did not assent to his assumptions, Baldwin would not alter them. Prejudices instilled since childhood, he admitted, led him to interpret Enlightenment philosophy by New Haven standards. The discrepancies he uncovered in Albany corroborated his father's perception of the city as "a place whair you will meat with much bad compiny." When the "Albany Gallants" rebuffed him, Baldwin consoled himself with his superior knowledge. Although he made no effort to learn their language, he took offense when bilingual Dutch spoke it in his presence. On one occasion, he began conversing with a friend in Latin and they walked away from their "rude" companions.[36]

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[35] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 158-66. In a letter dated January 18, 1783, Kent argued that college graduates would ruin society rather than labor at occupations beneath their expectations: "No Man can work while he studies; hence Study militates against Work - mental Improvement also refines Sensibility, that will not work; it will have Recource to the Pistols first...- it elevates Pride, that will not work, it will oppress first...- it refines Dissimulation, that will not work, it will turn Courtier & corrupt, first."

With regret Baldwin recognized that seeking a refuge in his books violated his own rules for achieving access to the elite by polishing his manners at polite gatherings:

> I am sensible I have a awkward stiffness & an embarrassment which makes me appear insipid in Company & yet that nothing but a frequent practice in Company will polish it off....I am determined not to play the sycophant - so frequent no Company - the pleasure I loose I set down as nothing - the advantage in employing those hours in reading is certainly something - The only particulars in which it is disagreeable are 1 the want of those accomplishments which are only obtained by frequenting Company - 2 the wound it might give my Character in N England should it be told without the Circumstances that I frequented no Company -

When his mentor in the Yates party implied he could bend the apprenticeship rules for practicing law in Albany, Baldwin responded by asking to borrow a novel. He decided to return to New Haven, where he could enter the dominant elite as an individual who conformed to prevailing values. Eventually, after New England interests triumphed in Albany, he regretted his choice.[37]

Eager to re-establish himself in New Haven's polite society, Baldwin accepted an appointment as tutor at Yale in the fall of 1783. According to his argument with Kent about the role of college graduates in America's development, aspiring literati could not realize their cultural ambitions without income from a profession. After the middle of the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of educated Americans decided they could benefit from the expanding market economy by becoming lawyers instead of ministers, as previous generations had. An intellectual division reinforced this pattern; the secular professions appealed to many who did not hold the New Divinity views pervading Connecticut's theological training at the time. Although he concurred with his father's evangelical attitudes enough to cringe at breaches of the sabbath, Baldwin neither experienced a religious conversion nor upheld the New Divinity's analysis of the Enlightenment. Instead, in referring to "the superior wisdom of our great Creator," "the beauty, the harmony..& the felicity of Man," and the "*triune* essence" of the "God of Nature," he approximated the moderate doctrines expounded by Ezra Stiles. Initially justifying his temporary position at Yale by studying divinity, he soon substituted scientific and literary interests for theology and determined to combine the qualities of "the Patriot the Philanthropist & the Christian" in whatever profession he chose.[38]

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[36] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 86, 127, 140-41, 86-180 passism.

[37] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 86-180 passim, 114-15, 127-28, 268; Kenney, Gansevoorts, p.42; Bledstein, Culture of Professionalism, pp. 123-25; Daniel H. Calhoun, Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 90.

A year after his return from Albany, Baldwin journeyed through New England, as far as Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Afterwards, he noted that travel contributed to the cosmopolitanism that helped him build connections to Connecticut's leading families on the foundation provided by his college education: "It polishes off the rust of pedantic maners & by observing those of different men in different places, it assimulates our manners with those of the World & ever enables us to adapt them to the company of the Place we are in." In Albany, however, he had exposed the limits of his ability to modify attitudes inculcated by education and upbringing in order to take advantage of unsettled social and economic conditions.[39]

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[38] S. E. Baldwin, *Life*, pp. 91, 97, 101, 131-32, 174-75, 181-83, 190-93, 240-41; Simeon Baldwin to Elizur Goodrich, April 1, 1783, Baldwin Family Papers; May, *Enlightenment*, pp. 59-61; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 404-14; Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, pp. 172-79, 313-21; Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, pp. 371-73; Cremin, *American Education*, p. 553-54; Calhoun, *Professional Lives*, chap. 4.

At the same time that many Americans were preparing to establish national institutions that would check disruptive experiments, Baldwin decided to consolidate the advances he had made. Admitted to the bar in January 1786, he resigned his tutorship the following September and began to practice law. In August 1787, only a month before he delivered his Phi Beta Kappa address, he married Rebecca Sherman, whose father came from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia for the occasion. Despite the tensions within his educational philosophy, he continued to believe that increasing knowledge rather than structural changes caused both individual and social improvement.[40]

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[39] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 207-29.

[40] Ibid., pp. 240-46, 264.

IV

In defining their political relationships after winning independence, Americans encountered the unresolved conflicts that accompanied commercial development. With an optimism about eighteenth century changes based partly on his mobility and partly on his philosophical principles, Simeon Baldwin continued to express his fundamental faith in republicanism during the incidents known as Shays' Rebellion. In his view, the federal government would further the divine plan for the new nation's glory.

Once Americans could no longer blame their problems on imperial interference, they discovered that their neighbors who had fought for independence did not always share the same opinions about economic growth. During the international commercial crises of the 1780s they disagreed about who should bear the hardships while merchants reestablished trade in the world market. After the war, New England traders were not offsetting the cost of European imports with exports and carrying charges. When foreign creditors proved unwilling or unable to extend terms, they called in book debts customarily balanced at infrequent intervals with minimal inconvenience for all parties. Dependent on this system for exchanging goods and labor, some debtors at the end of the chain struggled to preserve traditional modes of production in the face of commercial demands. Entrepreneurs eager to develop manufactures on the basis of the household economy found their plans jeopardized. Even the financial interests concerned about delivering specie abroad and securing payment of outstanding loans quarreled over the means. Some sought to stabilize current social structures by limiting further changes. Others, like Baldwin, gambled that they would benefit from novelties favoring the commercially astute.

Some Americans who believed that this intrusion of the market economy endangered their means of production suggested laws compelling debt collectors to accept certain barter goods in lieu of specie. Others did not object to the expansion of trade but wanted small producers to have a portion of the opportunities commanded by the mercantile powers. They urged more emissions of paper money, which had depreciated to their advantage during the war. However, neither of these measures protected traders' anticipated profits if they failed to sell surpluses or received less than they expected for currency. Therefore, opponents of these remedies included some creditors who had earlier augmented their investments by accommodating production patterns of the household economy.[41]

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[41] Ibid., pp. 205-6; Robert J. Taylor, Western Massachusetts in the Revolution (Providence: Brown University Press, 1954); David P. Szatmary, Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); East, Business Enterprise, chaps. 11-12; Jackson T. Main, The Anti-Federalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), chaps. 3-5; Henretta, American Society, pp. 163-64; Rolla M. Tryon, Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917), pp. 124-25; Foner, Tom Paine, pp. 146-59, 195-200, and "Tom Paine's Republic: Radical Ideology and Social Change," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 186-232; J.R. Pole,

Fundamentally confident about the harmony of the universe, Simeon Baldwin based his criticism of proposals for relieving the currency shortage both on his philosophic notions about the orderly functioning of nature and on his experience of upward mobility. Because he believed that everyone would gain from the growing activity that would result as individuals pursued their private goals, he embraced such market mechanisms as supply and demand. Formed by a social contract, the limited government Baldwin envisioned guarded property rights but did not interfere in the processes determining the exchange rates of money.

> We enter Society for the protection of property & Liberty. It is not necessary that I should give up either further than the exigencies of Government require. It is an arbitrary infringement upon my property for Govt. to say that I shall take less in value for my Debts than that for which I agreed.

Although he admitted that states could issue paper curren-cey, he denied the justice of artificially equating it with specie, contrary to the forces of self-interest: "If it is as good as Silver, then Love of money will ever induce me to receive it - if it is not so good, it is most direct Violation of my right to say I shall not receive it as such." For Baldwin, enlightened economic ideas did not enjoin self-denial for the public good; rather, they validated the expansive energy that would make the United States a commer-

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"Shays' Rebellion: A Political Interpretation," in The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution, 1763-1789, ed. Jack P. Greene (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 416-34; Van Beck Hall, Politics Without Parties: Massachusetts, 1780-1791 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), chaps. 2, 5.

cial empire.[42]

Simeon Baldwin extended these principles to the political agitation that ensued when the Massachusetts legislature failed to protect farms and tools from auction. Because the postwar distribution of power within the state government promoted his aims, Baldwin did not share in the frustrations of the distressed householders who finally despaired of obtaining results through petitioning, electing sympathetic representatives, and appealing to public opinion. Some New Englanders concluded that interests against whom they had no regular recourse controlled their government, a situation they compared to their earlier plight under British rule. In the War for Independence, many Americans had fought to prevent imperial commercial regulations from destroying their traditional mode of production, while others had battled to broaden the individual and property rights implied in Enlightenment philosophy. However, a few partisans of both views agreed that events of the 1780s justified time-honored extralegal actions resorted to only against arbitrary regimes. They supported the armed participants who rescued prisoners and possessions confiscated by the authorities and closed the courts to prevent further judgments against debtors.[43]

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[42] Simeon Baldwin to Charles Backus, August 4, 1786, Baldwin Family Papers; Joseph J. Ellis, After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), pp. 26, 29; Foner, Tom Paine, pp. 78-81, 89-90; Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment, pp. 72-75; John C. Cawelti, Apostles of the Self-Made Man: Changing Concepts of Success in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 46.

This revival of traditional extralegal tactics against the courts accompanied a widespread holtility toward the law profession that affected Baldwin's ambitions. To victims of the specie squeeze, attorneys represented the unwelcome invasion of commercial transactions. From their legislatures they sought measures to check the fierce competition among zealous young practitioners combing the countryside for business. In a letter to Baldwin, James Kent took the opposite position, welcoming the impetus for professionalization. He observed how a market economy made the study of law a scientific discipline demanding expertise gotten only with an education.

> In free & commercial Societies, the limitations of the Magistracy & the Regulations of private Property must necessarily be defined with scrupulous Accuracy, be extremely extensive, & encumbered with numerous & subtle Distinctions. The Knowledge of them must become a distinct Science.

Concerned that the unregulated diffusion of legal skills was making the field less "alluring to Men of Genius & Education," Kent recommended efforts to sustain its profitability and exclusiveness.[44]

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[43] Wood, American Republic, pp. 325-26; Pauline Maier, From Resistance to Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), pt. 1; Dirk Hoerder, Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massacusetts, 1765-1780 (New York: Academic Press, 1977), and "Boston Leaders and Boston Crowds, 1765-1776," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 233-71; Edward Countryman, "'Out of the Bounds of the Law': Northern Land Rioters in the Eighteenth Century," in American Revolution, ed. Young, pp. 37-69; Hall, Politics Without Parties, chaps. 3, 4, 6, 7.

[44] James Kent to Simeon Baldwin, February 1, 1785,

Kent's desire to discourage "needy & ignorant Persons" from entering his profession had political implications: "Law is so interwoven with Politics that it will always enable Gentlemen of active Geniuses to attain a decisive Superiority in Government." Americans ill-disposed toward the emerging pattern of social stratification rejected Kent's notion of meritocracy because of its tendency to establish above the populace a wealthy class of public servants qualified by their enlightened knowledge to exercise authority. Opponents of such privilege preferred a more equal distribution of political burdens and benefits among the whole electorate.[45]

While asserting these differing conceptions of political leadership, various members of New England society indicated their larger disagreements about the need for governmental organizations to contain conflicts of interest. For his part, Baldwin reacted rather calmly to the agitation in Massachusetts, reflecting his basic belief in the ultimate harmony underlying contending interests: "Disaffection to

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Baldwin Family Papers; Calhoun, Professional Lives, pp. 1, 7-9; Gerard W. Gawalt, The Promise of Power: The Emergence of the Legal Profession in Massachusetts, 1760-1840 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 44-70. For the role of lawyers in rural unrest in North Carolina, see James P. Whittenburg, "Planters, Merchants, and Lawyers: Social Change and the Origins of the North Carolina Regulation," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 34(1977):215-38.

[45] James Kent to Simeon Baldwin, February 1, 1785, Baldwin Family Papers; Chotiner, "Aristocracy of Virtue," pp. 149-50; Erenberg, "Change and Continuity," p. 87; Wood, American Republic, pp. 20-25, 144-45, 149, 180-81, 491-97; Hall, Politics Without Parties, chap. 8.

Government even there does not appear to be general as I at first was fearful it would be....Their real grievances are but few & such as can easily & doubltess will soon be redressed."[46]

Baldwin assumed that republican government depended on a relatively equal distribution of property, which America, or at least New England, had and would have for some time to come:

> Where the property is in the Hands of the People equally, the balance is evidently in favour of a republican form of Govt. When it gets into the Hands of a few their influence turns it into an Aristocracy....I infer that a republican form of Govt. is the proper one for this Country, & altho' the balance may alter yet many years must roll away before in the gradual Change we shall be obliged to alter our Government.

Because he was succeeding in improving his status despite growing disparities of wealth, he exaggerated the extent to which conditions suggested by his Enlightenment principles actually existed. In conformity with his theory of limited government, he conceived of virtue as a private matter, animating individuals to contribute to the public welfare by pursuing their personal goals without infringing the rights of others. For republicanism to prevail, according to Baldwin's vision of equality, "Education should be promoted in all the ranks of the people."[47]

Baldwin justified further commercial expansion on the basis of natural laws. He ruled out certain modes of corruption in a newly-formed republic: "Venality or Idleness...seldom accompany its Infancy They are...ever preceeded by the Pomp of Luxury itself - which at a proper stage of Society I think a virtue." Persuaded that all progess according to republican principles originated in the enlightened self-interest of educated individuals, Baldwin suggested that unwarranted opulence did not trigger the economic problems of the 1780s. He attributed altercations to violations of the pace decreed by nature.[48]

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[46] S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 386; Hall, Politics Without Parties, chap. 8.

[47] Simeon Baldwin to Charles Backus, January 8, 1787, Baldwin Family Papers; S. E. Baldwin, Life, p. 237.

Baldwin hoped the new system of national government would forward transitions to the market economy. To him, the United States Constitution appeared as one of the human mechanisms, devised from scientific knowledge, that advanced God's plan for "this American Empire rising...to the height of earthly glory & the grandeur of millennian splendour."[49]

V

These political events provided the context for Baldwin's Phi Beta Kappa oration. Perceiving the universe as essentially harmonious, he discounted the significance of opposing factions. He thought educated Americans needed information about the laws of nature that would enable them to stimulate their country's development.

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[48] Ibid., pp. 161, 205, 394; Simeon Baldwin to Benjamin Isaacs, January 13, 1784, and "Oration on the rise, progress, and Effects of Commerce," September 10, 1784, Baldwin Family Papers; Cawelti, Self-Made Man, p. 44-46; Drew R. McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 95-96, 126; Foner, Tom Paine, pp. 100-6, 117; William A. Williams, "The Age of Mercantilism," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 15(1958):419-37.

[49] S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 206, 384-86, 393; Simeon Baldwin to Rebecca Sherman, September 19, 1786, and Speech to the Graduating Class, June 19, 1786, Baldwin Family Papers.

Baldwin's interpretation of Enlightenment philosophy reinforced his confidence about America's expansion. When he pronounced humans "capable of infinite progress toward perfection," he summarized his educational agenda. Because Baldwin assumed that a benevolent creator had arranged the universe, he expected anyone using reason in analyzing the evidence of nature to deduce its true laws. By means of scientific investigations, he claimed, the educated would prove the existence of God, without the aid of revelation: "A proportion, harmony, & Symetry, which must flash Conviction upon the Infidel run thro' the whole." According to Baldwin, human beings with cultivated understandings could discern the eminence intended for the species: "We stand amazed with ourselves & say indeed - 'What a piece of work is Man! How noble in Reason! How infinite in faculties!...In action how like an Angel! In Apprehension how like a God!'" But to ensure perpetual improvement, he asserted, providence's flawless contrivance demanded individual effort in refining the intellectual powers. He saw the mind as

> the only part of Creation, which the Supreme being has left in a manner unfinished - The perfecting, the polishing & the Completion of the Character of the noblest being in the Lower Creation, depends on man. But the seeds of Perfection were sown by nature.

If people capable of perceiving the predetermined orderliness of nature became discouraged by life's imperfections, Baldwin expected them to continue their exertions consoled that temporary discord ultimately advanced a larger harmony.[50]

In the maturation of a person's mental faculties, Baldwin traced a relationship between the functions performed by human reason and the facts presented by experience. Reiterating the premises of Enlightenment philosophers like Locke, he disavowed innate ideas. While professing his allegiance to the principle of humanity's original equality, he justified the disparities resulting from variations in intellectual training: "Nature is not in fault - we come into the world equally destitute of Ideas - A small difference there may be in the powers of the mind, but a much greater is made by the different modes of Cultivating it." Before formulating the laws of nature, children had to accumulate sensations to which they could apply reason.

> In infancy, & in youth, we doubtless acquired simple Ideas - the Groundwork of knowledge - faster than we do in riper years. The tender mind is then open to impression, from every object which strikes the attention -; it is seldom buried in Close Thought. In mature life a calm sedateness is natural, & enables us to reflect on those Ideas.

Baldwin predicted that some people would try to shortcut this process, attempting to reproduce the outward manifestations of sophistication without acquiring real knowledge: "Dazzled with the external accomplishments, which are the beautiful Appendages of Internal Merit, they resolve to imitate the one without considering the necessity of their being supported by the other." These misguided individuals, he warned his audience, must "fail of their Object," when put to the test by others who better understood the divine blueprint. According to Baldwin, properly educated Americans would scientifically ascertain from empirical evidence the natural harmony God had instituted. Admitted to an elite that valued mental elevation, they would lead the United States toward the millennial empire.[51]

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[50] Simeon Baldwin, "Oration," pp. 28-30; Foner, Tom Paine, pp. 90-96.

Acknowledging that the human mind, while perfectible, remained fallible, Baldwin did not depend on the power of reason alone to accomplish the providential plan. In the natural order he included certain desires and instincts that motivated individuals to the appropriate actions. He compared the process of intellectual refinement activated by these drives to the laws of physics: "There is a vis enertiae in the mind as well as in matter, set it in motion, and there are a thousand inducements to keep it in motion, both from the selfish & social passions." Impulses to preserve one's own well-being harmonized with such urges to protect other people as benevolence, patriotism, and love of family. In his view, nature intended a balance between reason and the passions to harness the beneficial energies of the latter:

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[51] Simeon Baldwin, "Oration," pp. 30-32; Cremin, American Education, pp. 281, 361-65, 420-22.

> Without these the faculty of Reason would be almost in vain, & without reason, the passions if they could exist, would precipitate to every inconsistent excess. United as they are, the Passions in various ways excite the exercise of Reason, & Reason regulates the wild Sallies of the Passions.

If God had actually designed these faculties, as Baldwin maintained, then traditional structures were only impeding the proper functioning of the universe. And someone in his circumstances would consider the attributes favorable to commercial expansion divinely ordained.[52]

In this vein, Baldwin lauded voluntary associations like the Phi Beta Kappa as "those happy institutions, which excite, and mingle, the Social Passions of the Soul, improve the mind, & exalt the Dignity of Man." For customs preserving ascribed status, he wanted to substitute organizations formed by the agreement of individuals. Recognizing the difficulties in determining what unnatural obstacles to eliminate, he prescribed a test combining deductive and inductive versions of Enlightenment philosophy:

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[52] Simeon Baldwin, "Oration," pp. 33; Wills, Inventing America, chap. 21, and Explaining America: The Federalist (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1981), pp. 35-37, 83-84; Gerald Stourzh, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 73; Ralph Lerner, "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 36(1979):6-11; Albert O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 26-31; Andrew S. Skinner, "Economics and History - The Scottish Enlightenment," Scottish Journal of Political Economy 12(1965):1-22.

> It is not easy to Throw aside Antient Practices. We early imbibe those Prejudices which confine our walks to the Paths of our Fathers. Nor is it proper we should be hasty in deviating from them, yet when reason & experience have convinced us of the benefit of improvement - Let a noble independence make them.

Through scientifically constructed relationships, he expected educated Americans unconnected by family bonds to cultivate their affections for each other: "We enter the Society when the Mind is Young & Susceptible of the most tender impressions, which we can easily assimilate our Dispositions to each other, & fix firm the Deep rooted friendship of Unalienable Brothers." Instead of repressing natural propensities, he hoped institutions like the Phi Beta Kappa would enhance and direct the principles conducive to progress: "We can here Cherish & regulate those social Passions, which animate to Vigorous Exertions."[53]

Among the aids to national development Baldwin stressed the importance of American colleges. Applauding their differences from European universities, he recommended further changes,

> to make as easy as possible the path to general knowledge - To disentangle that which is useful from the technical Jargon of the antient Schools - to apply it to the Various purposes of Life, & by enlarging the mind, & meliorating the Heart, make useful men, & Good Citizens.

If colleges achieved these goals, graduates would have the means both for discovering the universal laws of nature and for training in the specific area of their talents - "an acquaintance with Science in general, and a Close attention to that Branch to which the Genius of the Student is particularly adapted." Not only would the United States produce "distinguished Characters" among its leaders but Baldwin expected it to surpass older countries in the "diffusion of Knowledge...among all ranks of People." After such educational improvements, he announced, enlightened individuals seeking their personal aptitudes would promote the providential scheme for an American empire.[54]

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[53] Simeon Baldwin, "Oration," pp. 27, 35-36, 38; Cremin, American Education, pp. 407-10; Erenberg, "Change and Continuity," pp. 135-36.

Baldwin had experienced the tensions arising from colonial development as a member of a struggling farm family in eastern Connecticut. The War for Independence endangered arrangements for his education. Absorbing enlightened ideas under the guidance of Ezra Stiles at Yale, Baldwin strove to obtain not only the knowledge but also the polish necessary for achieving a place in the New England elite. Amid the controversies of the 1780s that indicated sources of disagreement not obliterated by independence, he decided to become a lawyer, despite the factious role of that profession in commercial growth. Baldwin's faith that the federal Constitution could improve these conditions reflected a sweeping confidence, based on his analysis of events. He expected educated individuals aided by science to discern the laws of nature inaugurating a properous American empire.

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[54] Simeon Baldwin, "Oration," pp. 35-36.

CHAPTER TWO

"...THE NOBLEST FACULTIES OF THE MIND MUST DROOP AND LANGUISH," 1787-88

In the year following Baldwin's speech, three Phi Beta Kappa celebrations increased the significance of the orations as repositories of the cultural elites's educational ideas. In December 1787, the Yale chapter added a discourse to the festivities accompanying its annual election of officers. These performances continued until 1806 with even more regularity than those at commencement. The speakers for the December ceremonies were usually college tutors, beginning with Barnabas Bidwell in 1787. According to the organization's records, his "elegant" oration considered "Friendship, Morality & Literature." Although the members at the meeting requested a copy, none remains.[1]

The geographical scope of Phi Beta Kappa audiences widened when the newly instituted Dartmouth society inaugurated anniversary observances. After protracted consultations and a futile effort to contact the defunct chapter at

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[1] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the Phi Beta Kappa, December 6, 1787," and "PBK History, Initiation & Laws," Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT; Oscar M. Voorhees, The History of Phi Beta Kappa (New York: Crown Publishers, 1945), pp. 109-10.

William and Mary the Yale and Harvard clubs had chartered the new branch in New Hampshire. Its first exercises included a literary exhibition by Daniel Chipman, who graduated two weeks later and began studying law. The text of his address, like Bidwell's, did not survive.[2]

These activities at Yale and Dartmouth, by multiplying the occasions when Phi Beta Kappa orators discussed current issues, augmented the association's importance. But for magnifying the attention given these performances, the greatest advantage derived from the speech delivered by John Q. Adams at Harvard on September 5, 1788. According to the chapter records, he drew many illustrious listeners, among them

> his Excellency John Hancock Esqr. Governour of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Monsieur Tenneville Commander of his Most Christian Majesty's Squadron at Boston and the other officers of the Fleet, The French Consul residing at Boston, The Rev. President, Professors Librarian & Tutors of the University and several other Gentlemen of distinction.

At the time Adams was a law student, like many of the other early orators, but his audience knew him as the son of the eminent American politician who would soon become the first Vice President of the United States.[3]

In an address the Phi Beta Kappa minutes called ety about the hazards tormenting professionals starting their careers in a new nation. Unlike Baldwin, who had pointed out the possibilities for improvement in this unsettled situation, Adams viewed these uncertainties with a sense of foreboding. His father's prominence did not guarantee the orator a comfortable social position. He cautioned his audience to beware of an unwarranted self-confidence that might prevent Americans from coping with adversity when it struck.

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[2] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," September 5, 1788, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH; John K. Lord, A History of Dartmouth College, 1815-1909 (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), p. 544; Voorhees, History, pp. 48-50.

[3] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of Phi Beta Kappa," September 5, 1788, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.

> Unmindful of the precarious tenure by which all human enjoyments are held, we behold Fortune and Fame emulously striving to invest us in the possession of all the blessings which they can impart. ...But should some untoward event occur, to awaken us from these fantastic dreams, we descend with rapidity from the visionary elevation, and sink as far beneath the level of rational probability, as we had before been raised above it.

Adams worried that unless their philosophical categories compensating for the discrepancies between mental constructions and the limitations of reality, college graduates could not counter the quirks of fate. For him, America after the War for Independence was going through a "critical period" - a phrase he had used to characterize the era in his 1787 Harvard commencement address.[4]

The slight variations between the Yale and Harvard curricula could not explain why Baldwin and Adams embraced diverging formulations of Enlightenment philosophy. Although in this case their dissimilar expectations from America's future correlated with differences in their families' status, their reactions did not simply mirror class distinctions. Their voluminous archives documented their individual struggles to understand the transitional age in which they were living and to enhance the prospects it offered. In a small but suggestive way, the strategies each adopted contributed to the conflicts with which all Americans were contending at the close of the eighteenth century.

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[4] David G. Allen, Robert J. Taylor, Marc Friedlaender, and Celeste Walker, eds., Diary of John Quincy Adams, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2:448, 258; Gordon S. Wood, Creation of the American Republic (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 393; Robert A. East, John Quincy Adams: The Critical Years (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962), pp. 73, 185.

I

When interpreting the Enlightenment in his 1787 oration, Simeon Baldwin had indicated his continuing concern about polishing his Yale learning into the cosmopolitanism obligatory among New England's elite. Already a member of an important family, John Q. Adams had assimilated more worldly experiences before he entered Harvard than Baldwin would encounter in his whole life. Given Boston's social transformations during this period, however, he presumed that in order to deserve the superior status assigned him, he had to demonstrate academic and professional qualifications as well.

Before Adams was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1767, the towns surrounding Boston had begun to suffer effects of commercial development similar to those evident in Norwich. Like colonists in Connecticut, the area's inhabitants were grappling with divisive conflicts over land, currency, and religion. In Boston itself, the transformations began earlier and the resulting disharmonies became more acrimonious. To residents of a major seaport, where merchants had more economic power than farmers, land shortages mattered less than labor difficulties. As market relationships expanded into the hinterlands, smaller towns added to Boston's troubles. While successful individuals drew away business, more and more transients dispossessed during these changes swelled the ranks of the urban center's poor in their search for opportunities. More dependent on trade than other New England colonists, Bostonians underwent more severe dislocations and produced increasingly stratified social structures.[5]

As in Norwich, many colonists living in and near Boston believed that independence from England could solve the problems created by eighteenth century transformations. Although they too managed to fabricate a temporary unity for the sake of the war, Americans in Massachusetts, like their

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[5] Robert A. Gross, The Minutemen and Their World (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), pp. 19-29, 78-82, 87-89, 92-94; Gary Nash, The Urban Crucible (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. vii, 12, 17-18, 54-57, 61-65, 78-88, 112-18, 128, 136-39, 161-64, 182, 197, 204-14, 225-27, 241-42, 253, 257-58; Joseph Ernst, "'Ideology' and an Economic Interpretation of the Revolution," in American Revolution, ed. Alfred Young, pp. 159-85; Richard D. Brown, "The Emergence of Urban Society in Rural Massachusetts, 1760-1820," Journal of American History 61(1974):29-51; Douglas L. Jones, Village and Seaport: Migration and Society in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981), chap. 1; Van Beck Hall, Politics Without Parties: Massachusetts, 1780-1791 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), chaps. 1-2.

Connecticut neighbors, did not overcome internal antagonisms by leaving the British empire. In August 1787, shortly before his college graduation and during the national Constitutional Convention, Adams described Boston's pattern of mobility:

> The revolutions in private families are similar to those of States and Empires. There is scarce one family in Boston possest of great wealth, or having much political importance that can trace a genteel ancestry, or even such as lived comfortably and creditably, for three generations past. But nothing is more common than to see the descendants from honorable and opulent families now in the greatest obscurity and poverty.

Slightly skewed by apprehensions about his own future, Adams's analysis of economic pressures on the elite reflected long term trends rather than revolutionary innovations.[6]

During Adams's childhood, his father built a prospering law practice by taking advantage of eastern Massachusetts's transitions. Willing to venture from the farm he inherited to improve his business, John Adams rode the court circuit as far as Maine and twice moved his family from Braintree to Boston and back. Due to his absences, his four children - one girl with three younger brothers - received their education primarily under their mother's direction.[7]

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[6] Gross, Minutemen, pp. 169, 177-79, 190; Nash, Urban Crucible, pp. 256, 350, 360; Robert A. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), chap. 10; Jackson T. Main, The Social Structure of Revolutionary America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 191-95; Allan Kulikoff, "The Progess of Inequality in Revolutionary Boston," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 28(1971):375-412; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:270.

Averse to the financial risks by which other lawyers were amassing fortunes, John Adams sought public recognition instead. Once he became a member of the Continental Congress, he had little time for law cases to supplement the income that barely covered expenses. By these sacrifices, his eldest son lamented, he aggravated the factors limiting his ability to assure his family's status and wealth: "My father has been so much taken up all his lifetime, with the Interests of the public, that his own fortune has suffered by it: So that his children will have to provide for themselves." Nevertheless, they frequently benefited both socially and financially from their father's political prestige. Harvard officials, for example, did not charge tuition for young Adams. Even before he went to college, however, his family had enhanced his future prospects with an education far different from the usual preparations. In 1778, not yet eleven years old, Adams sailed for Europe with his father.[8]

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[7] Page Smith, John Adams, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1962), 1:298; L. Kinvin Wroth and Hiller Zobel, eds., The Legal Papers of John Adams, 3 vols. (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 1:lix-lxxiv; Samuel F. Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 4-9; David R. Musto, "The Youth of John Quincy Adams," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 113(1969):269-82.

[8] Smith, John Adams, 1:298, 348; Peter Shaw, The Character of John Adams (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), pp. 77, 104; Bemis, Foreign Policy, pp. 19; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:256; John M. Murrin, "Bench and Bar of Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," in Colonial America: Essays in Political and Social Development, ed. Stanley N. Katz (Boston: Litte, Brown & Co., 1971), p. 434.

In the next seven years, Adams crossed the Atlantic four times, making three of the voyages during the war. He attended schools in France and Holland, and visited Spain, Germany, Russia, Sweden, and England. Qualified in modern European languages, he served as secretary to his father and to the American envoy at St. Petersburg. Adams attended plays and ceremonial dinners, saw artistic and historical curiosities, and hobnobbed with European aristocrats and eminent Americans abroad. In short, at that time, no New England youth could have experienced more of Europe's cosmopolitan culture.[9]

Aware that his perspective on eighteenth century disruptions differed from Europeans', Adams did not accept his lessons in cosmopolitanism uncritically. While striving to comprehend foreign institutions and customs, he reaffirmed New England values when he discerned conflicts among Europeans themselves. On a journey across northern Spain, for example, he observed exploitative relationships between the impoverished peasants and their rulers, who enjoyed the support of religious authorities. Equating Catholicism with superstition, he celebrated America's lack of entrenched traditions that could obstruct personal and general improvements.

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[9] Bemis, Foreign Policy, pp. 9-18; East, Critical Years, p. 16; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:10-265; Charles F. Adams, ed., Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-77), 1:8-21.

> As for the People they are Lazy, dirty, Nasty and in short I can compare them to nothing but a parcel of hogs. Their cloaths are commonly of a dirt colour and their Breeches are big enough for to put a bushel of Corn in besides themselves. I do not wonder at it. Poor Creatures they are eat up by their preists. Near three quarters of what they earn goes to the Preists and with the other Quarter they must live as they can. Thus is the whole of this Kingdom deceived and deluded by their Religion. I thank Almighty God that I was born in a Country where any body may get a good living if they Please.

Although Adams gradually grew to appreciate the refined culture nourished by these very impediments, he prepared to have his sophistication tested by provincial standards when he returned to Massachusetts.[10]

Adams not only had to resist the supposition that he could obtain stature in America through the cosmopolitanism he gained from his father's position; he also had to replicate Baldwin's burdens of college and a law apprenticeship just to preserve his status.

> After having been travelling for these seven years, almost all over Europe, and having been in the world and among Company for three: to return and spend one or two years in the Pale of a College, subjected to all the rules, which I have so long been freed from: then to plunge into the Dry and tedious study of the law; for three years, and afterwards not expect, (however good an Opinion I may have of myself), to bring myself into Notice, under three or four years more; if ever: it is really a Prospect some what discouraging for a youth of my Ambition.

When traditional arrangements for transmitting ascribed rank disappeared in Europe, the alteration caused greater injustices than similar transformations in New England. For him, these disadvantages outweighed the personal profit he might have derived if his country had imitated such conventions. Although Adams expected to receive his Harvard degree in less than four years, he needed to prove his worthiness for membership in the provincial elite by demonstrating sufficient knowledge about the rational principles of the universe to calculate the opportunities provided by commercial growth. When Americans did accord him preferential treatment, however, he tempered his resentment over his father's failure to establish him securely with guilt about violating his enlightened convictions.[11]

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[10] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:25; E. J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848 (New York: New American Library, 1962), pp. 32-41.

In assessing Adams's qualifications, the Harvard authorities demonstrated the tensions arising from his hope that with his studies abroad he had actually fulfilled most of the normal academic requirements. By writing to Benjamin Waterhouse, a medical professor, his father tried to influence the examiners. He attempted to persuade them that his son's proficiency in polite learning compensated for his shortcomings in the classics.

> In truth, there are few who take their degrees at college, who have so much knowledge. But his studies

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[11] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:256-57; Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), pp. 23, 54-55; Edwin H. Cady, The Gentleman in America (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1949), pp. 38-41, 72, 83; Harry W. Chotiner, "The Aristocracy of Virtue: The American Ruling Class, 1783-1801" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Santa Cruz, 1975), pp. 103-4; Phyllis V. Erenberg, "Change and Continuity: Values in American Higher Education, 1750-1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974), p. 141.

> having been pursued by himself, on his travels, without any steady tutor, he will be found awkward in... Latin....It seems to be necessary, therefore, that I make this apology for him to you, and request you to communicate it in confidence to the gentlemen who are to examine him, and such others as you think prudent. If you were to examine him in English and French poetry, I know not where you would find anybody his superior; in Roman and English history, few persons of his age. It is rare to find a youth possessed of so much knowledge....In Greek his progress has not been equal....In mathematics I hope he will pass muster.

Reviewing his accomplishments in the fall of 1785, President Joseph Willard advised Adams to prepare the assigned texts on his own until spring, when he could join the junior class. The candidate's cosmopolitanism at least substituted for the social dimensions of undergraduate life. Nevertheless, the delay encouraged Adams's apprehensions that his years in Europe would prevent him from measuring up to New England standards. Finally admitted after a perfunctory examination, he became suspicious of special favors bestowed for his father's sake. Throughout his time at Harvard, Adams evaluated the relative importance of family background and enlightened knowledge in determining who benefited from social changes in eastern Massachusetts.[12]

II

When John Q. Adams entered Harvard, Enlightenment ideas in the undergraduate curriculum depended more on institutional structures than on the personality of the president, as they did at Yale. Willard managed administrative tasks but, unlike Ezra Stiles, did not instruct the seniors. Three professors - in divinity, the languages and mathematics - lectured to the college. Occasionally the liberal arts students attended presentations by the three members of the medical faculty. The four tutors each superintended a particular class, but they divided the recitations in Greek, Latin, mathematics, and metaphysics, so that one heard all classes in a designated subject. In three essential dimensions, Harvard's course of study invited undergraduates to adopt enlightened principles - its emphasis on science, religious training inclined toward Unitarianism, and the interpretation of philosophy.[13]

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[12] Charles F. Adams, ed., Works of John Adams, 10 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1850-56), 9:530-31; Worthington C. Ford, ed., Writings of John Quincy Adams, 7 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1913-17), 1:20-21n.; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:317, 2:1-2.

Adams arrived at college in time to attend the annual series of lectures in natural philosophy delivered by Samuel Williams. For the Enlightenment, the mathematical and physical sciences served as models for the rationally demonstrable and experimentally verifiable laws governing all aspects of the universe. The Harvard curriculum required every undergraduate to attain a competency in various branches, including geometry, astronomy, and chemistry. Pronouncing these his favorite studies, Adams complained that the measures ensuring a grounding in the basics trammelled more ambitious students.[14]

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[13] Josiah Quincy, The History of Harvard University, 2 vols. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, & Co., 1860), 2:133, 258-61, 263-67; Henry Adams, "Harvard College, 1786-87," North American Review 114(1872):118-19; East, Critical Years, pp. 54-72, 82-85; Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783 (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 512-14.

Extending these scientific criteria to religious education, the Harvard faculty - especially the divinity professor, Edward Wigglesworth - confirmed the liberal views Adams shared with many others in eastern Massachusetts. For them, the created order testified to the existence of a God whose attributes, consistent with reason, permitted "no Idea of a supreme being, that is not infinitely merciful, and good, as well as powerful." Because of their limitations, Adams noted, humans remained "entirely ignorant of the secret springs that keep the machine of the world in play." Nevertheless, natural religion admitted no doctrine "repugnant to Reason" or actually opposed to truths mortals could know with the aid of scientific method.[15]

A later generation would carry these assumptions to their logical conclusions in controversies over the trinity; however, most eighteenth century liberals concentrated on questions of human depravity. In the context of Boston's social and economic changes, some people could not reconcile their enlightened principles with a belief in eternal torments for original sin or for unavoidable failings. Like Adams, they abhorred a God who would punish anyone "who seeks the general welfare of the Society he belongs to, does all the good, and as little harm, as is possible, and adheres to what he has been taught from Infancy to be his duty." Examining the implications of this tendency, Adams observed its potential for obliterating distinctions between religion and philosophy maintained by the conservative clergy.

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[14] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:22; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:10-12, 29-30, 122-23, 147; Henry Adams, "Harvard College," p. 123.

[15] John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, 17 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873-1975), 12:511-17; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:359-60, 391-92, 394-95, 2:11, 28, 32-34; Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 5-6, 15-17, 45-47, 240-42; Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 56-58.

> It is perhaps to be feared lest some of our future divines may go too far...and assert that Christianity consists in morality alone. If this were the case, in what point would its excellence be shown, above the Systems of many heathen philosophers?...The harsh, discouraging doctrines held by many of our old preachers are absurd, and impious; but the other extreme may be more dangerous to Christianity.

In expounding his faith, he applied the philosophy endorsed by Harvard.[16]

With his class Adams recited Locke's *Essay* and Thomas Reid's *Enquiry into the Human Mind*. Demonstrating a familiarity with the debates in which these British philosophers engaged, he read Berkeley's *Dialogues* during summer vacation. Locke's premise, that ideas derived from sensations, not from innate sources, provoked others besides Adams to wonder "how far upon those Principles, Pyrrhonism might be carried." Common sense philosophers like Reid concluded that Berkeley accomplished the task by arrogating to God the cause of perceptions, thereby questioning the existence of matter and opening the way for that great skeptic, Hume.[17]

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[16] Allen et al., *Diary of J. Q. Adams*, 1:362, 403-4, 412, 2:152-53; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 390-93; Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1955), pp. 6-7, 135-59;

Even before he studied Reid, Adams had resolved perplexing problems by recurring to common sense propositions, insisting that generally accepted intuitions provided sufficient verification of universally valid self-evident truths. Frequently he constructed "proofs" typical of this philosophy. On one occasion he argued: "Should a man who for 50 years had studied nothing but the Proprieties and differences of colours, tell me that ebony and alabaster were of the same colour, I should think the assertion absurd, though I judge of colours only as they strike my Senses."[18]

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[17] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:394-95, 408, 2:75-76, 109, 121; Daniel W. Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 28-30; Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962; orig. ed. 1876), 1:29-46, 51-53; Gavin Ardley, "Hume's Common Sense Critics," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 30(1976):117-22; Theodore D. Bozeman, Protestants in an Age of Science (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 10-13; S. A. Grave, The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 11-27, 166-89; Olin M. Jones, Empiricism and Intuitionism in Reid's Common Sense (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927), pp. 46-59; Nicholas Phillipson, "The Export of Enlightenment," TLS, July 2, 1976, and "Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment," in City and Society in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Paul S. Fritz and David Williams (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), pp. 136-46; George E. Davie, "Hume and the Origins of the Common Sense School," Revue Internationale de Philosophie 6(1952):214-21, and "Berkeley's Impact on Scottish Philosophers," Philosophy 40(1965):222-34; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History 24(1955):260-62; Perry Miller, "The Rhetoric of Sensation," Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 167-83; Cremin, American Education, p. 275; Heimert, Religious History, pp. 109-13; James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy (Hildesheim: Georg Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966; reprint from 1875 ed.), pp. 27-29, 134-46, 159, 208-27; May, Enlightenment, pp. 8-9; Gladys Bryson, Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 122-36.

Like Yale students, those at Harvard practiced organizing and communicating the knowledge they obtained from their textbooks, lectures and related reading. His cosmopolitan experiences notwithstanding, Adams lacked proficiency in the arts of public speaking expected from the New England elite. For college exhibitions, he prepared the positions assigned him on such issues as "whether the immortality of the human Soul be probable from natural Reason," and "whether the diversity in national characters arise chiefly from Physical causes."[19]

Recognizing the value of rhetorical skills, Harvard undergraduates supplemented their required forensics with extracurricular activities at literary societies similar to the ones at Yale. Adams belonged to both the A.B. and the Phi Beta Kappa, where he discussed the effects of government on happiness, the advantages of civil discord, the connection between republicanism and the progress of literature, and other controversies occupying educated citizens of the newly independent country. This training culminated in the public performanaces that measured the achievements not only of individual students but also of the college as a whole.[20]

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[18] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 1:412.

[19] Ibid., 2:32-34, 110, 112-15, 121, 159-60, 191-93; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:21n.

Three times the Harvard authorities selected John Q. Adams to represent a high standard of scholarship and elocution before a judgmental audience. In the fall of 1786 he constructed a formal dispute with another student on "whether inequality among the Citizens, be necessary to the Preservation of the Liberty of the whole." The following April, in a conference on "the comparative Utility of Law, Physic and Divinity," he spoke for the law. At his commencement, he delivered an oration about "the importance and necessity of public faith, to the well-being of a Community." In tribute to his favorite studies, his classmates chose him to collect the mathematical theses for Class Day, but because of disagreements over the valedictory speech, they joined with President Willard in cancelling the ceremonies that year. From this and other conflicts intrinsic to the system of student ranking, Adams discovered how the central tension within an enlightened college, between acquiring polished manners and comprehending the laws of nature, illustrated larger social conflicts of the late eighteenth century.[21]

The community expected undergraduates to display the skills that would enable them to recognize the true order of the universe underpinning social and economic transformations. At the same time, they could not neglect the polite

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[20] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:47-49, 54-57, 60-62, 84-86, 106-9, 123-25, 169-72, 195-97, 233-35.

[21] Ibid., 2:82-83, 88, 93-94, 99-103, 175, 199-204, 222-24; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:30.

accomplishments that would qualify them as leaders. When Adams's class petitioned for private graduation exercises, the Harvard corporation refused. President Willard relayed its fear that "if public Commencements were lain aside, there would be no stimulus to study among the scholars." Some students like Adams always kept a clear image of their education's long-term purposes. Others, however, needed the more immediate inducement furnished by the distribution of exhibition parts in order of class rank. According to Adams, a number of his classmates completely ignored their lessons between recitations, while many prepared during divinity lectures. Beyond requiring attendance, the college could not compel attention or achievement. Spurred to diligence "merely from the horror of syllogisms," the least regarded commencement exercise, a few even developed a fondness for their schoolwork, he declared.[22]

At the beginning of his senior year, Adams assured his father that, allowing for differences in students' talents, "it always happens that their reputation is in an exact ratio to the attention they pay to studying." During the months following, however, he noted discrepancies between his own notions of academic merit, the recognition afforded by the Harvard authorities, and the opinions of the other undergraduates. The concerns of the existing elite for the next generation's learning affected the format of exhibitions. When explaining the corporation's insistence on a public commencement, the president admitted that a political consideration supplemented the stimulus to academic excellence:

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[22] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:29-30, 37-38, 89-90, 205; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:24.

> Another reason which Mr. Willard said, had weight, although the gentlemen did not choose to avow it publicly, was their fear of offending the future governor by depriving him of that opportunity to show himself in splendor and magnificence.

Audiences evaluated members of eminent families to see if they would strengthen the positions ascribed to them or if ambitious competitors with enlightened knowledge would most likely supplant them in important stations. Apprehensive lest his eloquence did not match his proficiency in other subjects, Adams worried that his listeners would deem him undeserving of distinction. Many students, whether they expected to inherit or acquire prestige, complained that their assigned standing suffered because of unduly obsequious faculty favorites. Sometimes social prejudices and envy motivated these protests, but Adams testified to the legitimacy of certain grievances.[23]

If college authorities had few means to enforce discipline, they permitted undergraduates little recourse against arbitrary rulings. Seniors asserted their appraisals of classmates in their selections for Class Day. Held early in the school year, these elections could guide or criticize the faculty choices for official exhibitions. Adams's class battled with the administration to have its valedictorian speak in English instead of Latin. Having registered its judgment of the esteem due their peers, the final meeting voted to forego the benefits they might reap from an additional public display of their abilities for the sake of depriving their rulers of a victory. Whether based on enlightened accomplishments or social standing, undergraduates' rating systems guarded against toadyism.[24]

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[23] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:189, 205; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:27, 34n.; Charles F. Adams, ed., Life in a New England Town: 1787, 1788 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1905), pp. 26n., 152n.

If class members decided that the allocation of parts did not represent their true worth, they expressed their displeasure through traditional forms of rowdiness, sometimes resulting in drunken brawls and broken windows. The college government tolerated many such disorders, accepting apologies as sufficient punishment for most excesses. It even weighed how much opposition its rankings would meet. But, since syllogists almost always went on drinking sprees when informed of their fate, no matter how well deserved, these disruptions did not in all cases signify serious protests of injustice.[25]

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[24] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:30-31, 82-84, 88, 94, 96;

[25] Ibid., 2:37-38, 175; Dirk Hoerder, Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massachusetts, 1765-1780 (New York: Academic Press, 1977), chap. 1. For disturbances at Yale, see Simeon E. Baldwin, Life and Letters of Simeon Baldwin (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Co., n.d.), pp. 235-36; Simeon Breed to Simeon Baldwin, May 29, 1786, Baldwin Family Papers, Yale University Library; Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 57-59.

In Adams's accounts, confrontations between Harvard tutors and their pupils took on a more intense character than conflicts regarding exhibitions. They signified the varying demands put on enlightened education by three social groups - the former elite that needed to shore up its position in the developing market economy, beneficiaries of this growth who still lacked polish, and numerous individuals hoping to improve their status and wealth with a college degree. Usually recent graduates in the last category became tutors while preparing for professional careers. Adams would never have held such a post, because his family could pay the fee for his studies in a law office. He recorded some of the effects these distinctions had on college life.

At times Adams complained about his classmates who scorned their preparations, depending instead on social activities to train them for membership in the elite; however, he also noticed that his tutors' personal preoccupations impaired their teaching. They modified the prescribed curriculum to accommodate their own preferences as well as some of the priorities asserted by undergraduates. One tutor treated Reid's common sense philosophy "very cavalierly," in Adams's opinion. Another could not compel many students to master the mathematical principles of Euclid that furnished models for natural laws. A third substituted a superficial repetition of Locke's words for critical commentaries on his psychological theories. Frequently the instructors cancelled recitations, either to pursue career opportunities like a distant preaching assignment or to release the scholars for events important for their socialization, such as a class meeting or a horse race.[26]

The rifts arising from late eighteenth century changes, implicit in these academic issues, became more overt in questions of college discipline. The enlightened intellectual system the tutors expounded, combining rational and empirical elements that could either challenge or confirm prevailing assumptions, helped some undergraduates advance into New England's elite. Others they assisted in consolidating their families' dominance. Adams described the sorts of difficulties that ensued when ambitious young graduates exercised authority, based on their individual academic achievements, over students who recognized their instructors' social inferiority:

> It seems almost to be a maxim among the Governors of the College, to treat the Students pretty much like brute Beasts. There is an important air, and a haughty look, that, every Person, belonging to the government, (Mr. Williams excepted) assumes, which indeed it is hard for me to submit to.

Even the worldly Adams, aware of acquired learning's value in securing an elevated station in the new nation, chafed under the manifestations of his teachers' insecurities.[27]

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[26] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:10, 23-34, 49, 109, 111; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:21n.; Carl A. Hangartener, "Movements to Change American College Teaching, 1700-1830" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1955), p. 364. To compare the status of horseracing in Virginia, see T. H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling Among the Gentry of Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 34(1977):239-57.

The tutors' need for approval from the existing elite rendered them susceptible to students' expressions of displeasure, according to Adams: "With all their pedantic despotism, they affect Popularity, and I believe the fear of hissing, or shuffling often prevents them from being so arbitrary as they would otherwise be." Although the college's permissiveness toward customary protests extended to breaking glass in the windows of offensive tutors, it drew the line at actual assault. Adams captured the ambiguity of these social conflicts when he excused a drunken syllogist who tossed gravel in the face of a tutor trying to restore quiet: "There are here, in College persons, who have seen [the tutor], much intoxicated, as [the syllogist] was yesterday; and behaving quite as ill." Adams was arguing that the tutor ought to show compassion because he too had engaged in the traditional practices by which eighteenth century youth measured external authority against the maturing self-control that would eventually enable them to govern others.[28]

Adams had less sympathy for another convention that allowed students to regulate their disciplinarians, the class gift.

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[27] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:28-29; C. F. Adams, New England Town, p. 19n. In 1788, Samuel Williams, the exception to Adams's rule, left Harvard under suspicion of financial improprieties. See Sibley and Shipton, Graduates of Harvard, 15:140-41.

[28] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:34-35, 38-39.

> The Custom, I think is a bad one, because, it creates partialities in a Tutor, because it increases the distinction between the wealthy, and the poor Scholars, because it makes the Tutor in some measure dependent upon his Class, and because to many that Subscribe it is a considerable expense but the Salaries of the Tutors, being so low, and it having been for many years an universal custom, I am sorry to sorry to see our Class so behind hand.

This arrangement tempted the underpaid instructors to indulge wealthy undergraduates. It undercut the logical consistency of the rational principles that enabled intellectually qualified individuals like themselves to alter prevailing structures.[29]

The most conspicuous example of these tensions that Adams mentioned occurred on Election Day in 1786. As usual, the students who remained at college conducted a mock election. They set aside the normal academic order by which the tutors maintained discipline and reaffirmed the realities of social and political precedence in eastern Masschusetts. Adams described the pagentry of "choosing a governor and Lieutenant governor, for the Class. They commonly take some rich fellow, who can treat the Class now and then." When they marched in procession into commons the tutors tried to banish this reminder of the tools the ruling class had at its disposal to preserve its ascendancy. The students retaliated with traditional forms of disorderly behavior:

> At last the Tutors rose, and as they were going out, about half a dozen fellows hiss'd them, they were enraged, turn'd round, and look'd as if they would

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[29] Ibid., 2:25, 27-29. For the gifts Simeon Baldwin received as a tutor at Yale, see S. E. Baldwin, Life, pp. 195-99.

> devour us. But they did not discover one Person; which made them look silly enough. When they turned their backs again, there was nothing but hissing, and groaning, and clapping hands, and stomping, heard in the Hall, till they got into the yard where, a few Potatoes were sent out to meet them.

In this passage, Adams depicted the pattern of social relations, highlighted by the mock election, that gave a Harvard education its peculiar significance for the elite. At college members of families who might have inherited their status or wealth had to submit to the same enlightened standards that permitted less privileged scholars, like their tutors, to acquire the polite accomplishments necessary for improving their station. They might throw food in protest at these representatives of a competing source of prominence, but their teachers were actually providing them with the intellectual instruments for interpreting the changes in the developing commercial society to their own advantage.[30]

For Adams, enlightened knowledge constituted the most important dimension of his college education. Outside of classes and during vacations, he entered into the same sorts of social activities Baldwin did, but he did not demand any further sophistication from them. Since he was not seeking a wife for access to the elite, Adams lost patience with women who had cultivated the traits Baldwin considered appropriate. He preferred the few prepared to share his intellectual preoccupations. Unlike Baldwin, Adams did not want the Enlightenment to furnish a theoretical foundation for a better world in which he could realize his personal ambitions. Rather he sought from it the means of analyzing the perplexing transformations he experienced. Adams wanted to protect himself from the accidents that might destroy his prestige in changing times.[31]

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[30] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:43-44; E. P. Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture," Journal of Social History 7(1974):382-405; Hoerder, Crowd Action, chap. 1.

III

Baldwin and Adams illustrated the diverging applications of Enlightenment ideas in their evaluations of the United States Constitution. More worried than Baldwin about their compatriots' abilities to preserve republican values amid social and economic transitions, Adams employed enlightened concepts to repulse threats to existing structures. He opposed both the anarchy he believed imminent in western Massachusetts and the aristocracy he feared might thrive on political innovations.[32]

Adams was toiling to preserve his status at a time when rich and respected New England families were losing positions of power more frequently than ever before. He strove to balance his cosmopolitanism with knowledge about the laws of nature that would help him calculate the effects of commercial conditions. He blamed the conflicts of the 1780s on individuals who failed to take similar steps.

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[31] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:74, 243, 261; Henry Adams, "Harvard College," pp. 126-28; Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:38.

[32] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:18-19, 30-31; East, Critical Years, pp. 57-63, 85-87.

Americans confronting eighteenth century transformations had to struggle to uphold New England values, he maintained, or they would suffer the consequences of their corruption in intensified social turmoil. Adams attributed the scarcity of specie to too much luxury and too little industry among "the People." While he acknowledged bad example set by the wealthy, Adams nonetheless asserted that debtors "must look to themselves, to their Idleness, their dissipation and extravagance, for their grievances." Since in his view a person could minimize economic risks only through austerity, self-discipline and the enlightened learning supposedly available to all, disappointed competitors had no right to "think themselves injured...because other Persons have been more industrious, more prudent and more successful than they."[33]

The public antipathy toward lawyers, exacerbated by internal rivalries, disheartened Adams:

> When I consider these disadvantages, which are in a degree peculiar to the present time, and those which at all times subsist; when I reflect that good abilities, great application, and a favorable fortune are requisite to acquire that eminence in the profession which can insure a decent subsistence, I confess I am sometimes almost discouraged, and ready to wish I had engaged in some other line of life.

As usual, however, he resolved to work at his career with diligence, hoping to offset the consequences of adverse circumstances.[34]

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[33] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:91-92, 99-103, 129-32, 258-62; Wood, American Republic, pp. 416-21; Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 24(1967): 3-20.

Although few Americans wanted a political system in which only the rich could afford to rule, Adams warned those who applauded John Hancock for returning part of his salary as governor that they were provoking this very catastrophe. While he would not have introduced the custom of Parliamentary sinecures into New England as a strategy for ensuring loyal coalitions, Adams yearned for more sturdy structures of political organization: "It is impossible for a free nation to subsist without parties, and unfortunately our parties are not yet formed."[35]

In his analysis of the general political impact of Shays' Rebellion, Adams illustrated attitudes consistent with his other treatments of Enlightenment concepts. On September 7, 1786, he recorded a scientific analogy that allowed for the potential blessings of political turmoil kept within bounds.

> Such disturbances if properly managed may be productive of advantages to a Republican Government, but if they are suffered to gain ground, must infallibly lead to a civil war, with all its horrors....Such commotions, are like certain drugs, which of themselves are deadly Poison but if properly tempered may be made, highly medicinal.

Two days later, however, Adams declared the situation out of control to a degree that threatened the government: "We are now in a perfect State of Anarchy. No laws observed, and no power to Punish delinquents; if these treasonable practices, are not properly quelled, the Consequences must be fatal to the Constitution, and indeed to the Commonwealth."[36]

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[34] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:37-38; C. F. Adams, New England Town, pp. 57-58n.

[35] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:31-32.

Always uneasy about the detrimental effects altered economic distinctions might have on his future, Adams denied not only the empirical reality but even the possibility of equality of property. He struggled to accept the legitimacy of acquired prestige and to withstand the temptation to think he could inherit his father's station. For Adams, virtue meant the rejection of selfish desires for the public good. He assumed that republicanism required equal political rights but did not permit the tyranny of the majority. Apprehensive about both aristocracy and extreme egalitarianism, Adams wanted political institutions that would diminish the likelihood of greater social transformations.[37]

For the good of the republic, Adams prescribed the moderation of economic growth. Led by the wealthy, Americans had to renounce luxury, he declared, or risk political disaster:

> Within these few years, there has been an astonishing decay of public virtue among us....If but a few individuals of fortune and reputation, would agree, to confine themselves to the real necessaries and conveniences of life, and to discard those superfluities, which have brought our Country on the verge of her ruin; their example would soon be followed by the generality of the People, and all complaints of imaginary grievances, with

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[36] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:91-93.

[37] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:29, 33; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:99-103; Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 122-25, 190-91.

> their lawless and destructive consequences would soon be at an end.

Adams affirmed the need for enlightened learning to counter the ills of excessive sophistication.[38]

With this interpretation of republicanism, Adams took a position on ratification of the federal Constitution that opposed Baldwin's. Adams agreed with the antifederalists who found state institutions more effective in circumscribing dangers of upheaval. Although he craved a strong political framework for arresting tendencies toward excessive democracy, Adams worried that "the new continental form of government" would "increase the influence, power and wealth of those who have any already." He feared that the proposed structures might make social distinctions hereditary and devalue the enlightened learning he had endeavored to acquire and defend.[39]

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[38] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:129-32, 258-62.

[39] Ford, Writings of J. Q. Adams, 1:32, 39; Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:302-3, 357-58; Jackson T. Main, The Anti-Federalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), chaps. 6-11; Wood, American Republic, pp. 428-615; Donald H. Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), pp. 155-64; May, Enlightenment, pp. 96-101; Christopher Collier, Roger Sherman's Connecticut: Yankee Politics and the American Revolution (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), pp. 275-81; Gaspare J. Saladino, "The Economic Revolution in Late Eighteenth Century Connecticut" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964), p. 160; Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Social Change and the Meaning of the American Revolution," Journal of Social History 6(1973):403-39; Chotiner, "Aristocracy of Virtue," pp. 80-81, 84; Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 106-8; Forrest McDonald, "The Anti-Federalists," and Cecelia M. Kenyon, "Men of Little Faith: The Anti-Federalists on the

IV

Because Simeon Baldwin and John Q. Adams had experienced eighteenth century conflicts differently, they disagreed about which variant of Enlightenment philosophy would best prepare college graduates to deal with future convulsions. The visionary tendencies Baldwin epitomized horrified Adams. Amplifying notions he had learned as an undergraduate in his Phi Beta Kappa address, he extolled intellectual principles that reduced the possibility of drastic mutations and protected individuals from the modifications that did occur.

In accord with his perceptions of the late eighteenth century, Adams tried to find interpretations of Enlightenment philosophy likely to confine commercial growth. He described the dire consequences awaiting educated youths whose rational calculations did not provide them with accurate knowledge about their prospects. Unlike Baldwin, he did not assume that divine arrangements guaranteed a harmony between human formulations of natural laws and the actual order of the universe. For Adams, the expectations of some college graduates had no more relation to reality than "fantastic dreams." Magnified "through the deceptive medium of fansy, or of the passions," their delusions increased. When they discovered their errors, they plunged from this

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Nature of Representative Government," in The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution, 1763-1789, ed. Jack P. Greene (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 365-78, 526-66; Hall, Politics Without Parties, chaps. 9-10.

"visionary elevation" into an equally dangerous despair.

> We dwell with involuntary terror upon the ideas of the malice, the treachery and envy which we expect from our fellow mortals untill we are ready to imagine that our Life is to be a state of continual warfare with the whole human race. The baseless fabric of our hopes vanishes like the phantom of a fairy tale, and the mind oppressed by the contemplation of these gloomy objects is almost ready to settle in a state of sullen despondency.

He feared some members of his audience might suffer these extremes because he doubted the ultimate correspondence between reason and nature. Where Baldwin saw a providential design, Adams observed the whims of the goddess Fortune, a "blind capricious deity."[40]

Adams sought to compensate for this flaw. He urged Americans who shared his convictions about reason's limits to make themselves "independent of external circumstances." Despite their diligent efforts to comprehend the probable course of events, they had to prepare themselves for unforeseeable misfortunes. They could best avoid disappointments, Adams insisted, by exercising reason in another way - "to lay a restraint upon the freedom of a wanton imagination." In particular, he advocated curbing one's ambitions. He enjoined his contemporaries not to emulate the exploits of the ancient Romans:

> When we consider, that those atchievements could never

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[40] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:448, 451; Musto, "Youth of J. Q. Adams"; Lester H. Cohen, "The Course of Human Events: American Historical Writing in the Revolutionary Period" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1974), pp. 315-16, 175, 179-80, 299; Bozeman, Protestants, p. 18; Heimert, Religious History, pp. 209-14; Meyer, Democratic Enlightenment, pp. 133-35.

> have been performed had not their Country during the same period been engaged in a perpetual struggle to maintain her very existence against her hostile and surrounding neighbors; when we reflect upon the dreadful calamities which the republic underwent, and how often she was brought to the brink of destruction, the rude and imperious calls of ambition must yield to the soft, persuasive eloquence of humanity, and a sentiment of real patriotism, must forbid us from pursuing the painful preeminence.

To protect others as well as themselves from the difficulites of determining the future, he directed his enlightened listeners to "circumscribe [their] desires within rational bounds."[41]

In describing the heroes of the Roman republic, Adams drew a parallel to the participants in the War for Independence. He challenged Baldwin's theory that the tasks at hand for their generation offered occasions for the same greatness. Further, he suggested, only selfish, inhumane and unpatriotic Americans would wish for similar ordeals, or worse, try to create them. Again calling on reason to bind ambition, he represented the satisfactions furnished by more moderate situations.

> There is a certain station in life, which if well filled will entitle us to the respect and esteem of our fellow citizens....The rewards of Reason are proportioned rather to the improvement than to the magnitude of the trust; and in her impartial eye we may presume that the man whose usefulness is confined only by the limits of his opportunities to serve his fellow mortals, is no less meritorious than the founder of an empire or the discoveror of a world.

On one level, Adams was providing himself with an excuse in case he failed to measure up to his founding father. At the same time, he was discouraging attitudes toward mobility that fostered the expanding market economy. If they wanted to secure their future contentment, regardless of adverse twists of fate, Adams cautioned his cohorts "to view [themselves] seated for life" in a position of "intermediate" status. He praised the "advantages of utility and respectability" of traditional occupations: "In a free country where honour consists not in idleness, the farmer, the mechanic, and the tradesman maintain the dignity due to their station, and become active constituent parts of the political body." Without abandoning Enlightenment philosophy, he advised fallible mortals not to attempt to change the existing order too much.[42]

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[41] Allen et al., Diary of J. Q. Adams, 2:449-50.

For those college graduates still bent on entering the professions, he catalogued the virtues he considered essential for practitioners in the ministry, law, medicine, and commerce. While discussing the desirable characters of merchants, he established his opinions about American economic growth. There could exist, he allowed, a patriot "whose industrious activity is exerted to promote the public interest in connexion with his own." To contribute to the common good, traders should not augment their profits by deepening their involvement in international commercial networks. Rather, to win Adams's applause, they would concentrate on the possibilities within the household mode of production, "encouraging the agriculture and manufactures of" the United

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[42] Ibid., 2:449-50.

States. Cultivating the country's inland resources instead of engaging in mercantile connections abroad, the orator argued, "enlarges the sphere of her beneficial commerce, and liberates her from the humiliating shackles of european dependency."[43]

Apprehensive about the evils competition engendered in economic activities, Adams did not have qualms about the quest for enlightened knowledge.

> There is indeed one form under which Ambition assumes not merely the form, but with it all the amiable attractions and all the conscious dignity of Virtue. It is in the desire to appear conspicuous in the walks of literature and Science....Its gratification depends, not upon the destruction, but upon the improvement of mankind.

Precisely because intellectual accomplishments did not necessarily produce or require social changes in his view, educated Americans could seek distinction in the "departments of Philosophy and History; of Oratory and Poetry." Their endeavors would not harm anyone so long as they recognized the disjunction Adams indicated between reason's fabrications and its tenative insights into the operations of nature.[44]

Because he separated American cultural achievements from the development of a commercial empire, Adams based his nation's reputation on its "most illustrious" individuals, not on a diffusion of education throughout the population, as Baldwin did. Nor did he share the Yale graduate's jubilation over "the equality and mediocrity of fortunes" that hindered "literary genius." In "an infant country," even the son of the first Vice President had to work for a living instead of leading a life of letters. To advance science and literature, an educated American had to snatch time from an "active profession" that dulled the finer sensibilities: "In the ordinary course of human transactions the noblest faculties of the mind must droop and languish from want of culture and improvement." Even without the support of institutions sustaining a leisured class, however, a few "possessing the divine spark of transcendent genius" were surmounting these obstacles. Specifically in his speech, Adams pointed to Jefferson's scientific description of Virginia as a refutation of Buffon's theory that life forms degenerated in the western hemisphere. By citing exceptional talents in defense of the United States, he was suggesting a solution to the dilemma of cosmopolitanism and corruption. While the nation remained economically provincial and free from European luxuries, an intellectual elite could match its merits against "the civilized world."[45]

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[43] Ibid., 2:450.

[44] Ibid., 2:451-52.

In his Phi Beta Kappa oration, Adams disclosed his hopes and fears for American college graduates in the newly-constituted republic. As the eldest son of a Boston lawyer ready to serve the public, Adams had a special perspective on the disputes surrounding the War for Independence. Abroad on diplomatic missions, he absorbed a cosmopolitanism unavailable in America. In order to secure his position, Adams studied the Enlightenment concepts institutionalized at Harvard. There he recognized manifestations of the conflict between acquired and ascribed status in determining who would lead the new nation. Adams opposed the plans for a new federal government on grounds suggested in his Phi Beta Kappa oration. For him, the expansion envisioned by Baldwin would produce dismaying consequences if human reason did not in fact accord with God's design. From education he sought learning that would enable him to limit further transformations.

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[45] Ibid., 2:451-52.

CHAPTER THREE

"IN THE PRESENT AGE OF DARING ENTERPRIZE, AND RESTLESS AMBITION...," 1788-90

Like the social, economic and political turbulence experienced and analyzed by Baldwin and Adams, the conflicts at the end of the 1780s reflected the decisions of individual Americans. In opposition and in cooperation with each other, they acted within and against the confines of existing institutions and the logical structures of their ideas. Many former colonists who had blamed their problems on British rule expressed dismay when they discovered that resistance to their positions had not disappeared with independence but was actually increasing in virulence. The federal Constitution had established certain limits to the possibilities available in the new nation. But even among members of the elite, it did not rule out disagreements over policies concerning the developing market economy. Rival factions were taking more and more extreme positions, especially on the local and international issues of commercial expansion. As before, the varieties of Enlightenment thought supported the arguments of fiercely contending interests.

I

Between John Q. Adams's address in 1788 and the close of the year 1790, eleven orators spoke at Phi Beta Kappa anniversary celebrations. During this period, the records of the various chapters indicated a growing concern with public reactions to their exhibitions. The minutes and correspondence never made negative comments on the performances. If an unprepared speaker seemed likely to disappoint an audience or if external hostility to the society promised a meager showing, the members resolved not to admit outsiders to the festivities. Essentially, they preferred to appear exclusive rather than look foolish. In this respect, their actions paralleled undergraduates' efforts to advertise or conceal their attainments at official exercises.

Ten weeks after the Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa selected Daniel Dana for its 1789 speaker, it directed him to deliver his address "in a public manner" the following month. When the Yale association tried to take the same steps in a different order that summer, it encountered more obstacles. On July 6th the society "voted that the Exhibitions on the day succeeding Commencement should be public." Four consecutive weekly meetings nominated orators who refused the appointment. Three days before the scheduled observances, which no longer included a speech, the organization rescinded the earlier decision to invite outsiders. When the closed session convened, "many of the absent members attending," it sanctioned a private entertainment for the next year as well.[1]

At this point, eight years after its founding, the Yale chapter already had numerous alumni, technically eligible to engage in all activities, who participated only on special occasions. Even without the uninitiated, therefore, anniversary gatherings might produce an especially dignified assembly. This undefined dual membership status contributed to the difficulties in Bishop's case.

Favorable references to the attendance at these events usually remarked on both the quality and the quantity of the listeners. Although the 1789 Harvard orator, William Emerson, did not draw quite the attention Adams did, the chapter records noted "a very respectable audience, consisting of the Governor & L. Governor, Corporation & Overseers of the University & other distinguished characters." A letter reporting on the proceedings in Cambridge the following year mentioned "a respectable and crowded audience - consisting of the governor of the University and other literary gentlemen, a number of ladies - and the students." This observation, made by Thaddeus M. Harris, one of the exhibitors, not only alluded to various sorts of professional and amateur male scholars; it also disclosed an appreciation for the presence of women. To some extent, such passages document the kinds of people at the ceremonies. More precisely, they suggest which spectators impressed the writers. What exactly constituted a "respectable" body was not completely clear. Certainly, the Phi Beta Kappa rejoiced when civil and academic rulers witnessed its successful execises.[2]

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[1] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," May 7, 1789, July 16, 1789, July 20, 1789; Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," July 6, 1789, July 13, 1789, July 20, 1789, July 27, 1789, August 2, 1789, September 7, 1789, September 10, 1789, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT (hereafter YUA).

Similarly, the adjectives chosen in commending the discourses revealed something about the image the institution wanted to project. Having called Emerson's address "elegant & spirited," the Harvard records characterized the 1790 speeches as "elegant & ingenious" and the deliveries as "agreeable & ingenious performances." Harris declared the talk that accompanied his own "a sensible and animated oration." The Yale minutes enlarged the spectrum of compliments. In 1788, they simply pronounced all three offerings "excellent." Two years later the secretary adopted the word "elegant" to describe the Phi Beta Kappa exhibitions at commencement, while the entry for December employed the term "entertaining." This array of expressions betrayed a solicitude about the liveliness of the productions and their ability to stimulate the listeners' interest. The phrasing in these offical accounts also attested to a heed for refinement and polish.[3]

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[2] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," September 8, 1789, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA (hereafter HUA); Thaddeus M. Harris to Simeon Baldwin, August [September] 2, 1790, YUA.

[3] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," September 8, 1789, September 1, 1790; Harris to Baldwin, August [September] 2, 1790; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 11, 1788, December 5, 1788, September 9,

The various individuals who served as Phi Beta Kappa orators at this time expressed opinions that reflected their perceptions of late eighteenth century transformations and of the philosophical concepts they accepted in the course of their education. Their ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-nine. Only Samuel Austin, a minister, was already employed in his chosen profession. Even the twenty-nine-year-old had graduated from college just a year before he gave his address. All received their bachelors' degrees after the War for Independence ended. At some point, they all studied either law or divinity. Roger Newton died while still serving as a Yale tutor, less than a year after his speech. A number were teaching for an income while preparing for their later careers, and several maintained graduate residences at their colleges.[4]

Of the eleven orations given in this period, only three could be located, all from Harvard. Not even a hint remains of the topic selected by the sole Dartmouth orator. On the other hand, the Yale Phi Beta Kappa noted at least a vague subject for all the pieces heard. After commencement in 1788, the members listened to Samuel Austin "praise...the American characters" and to Eli Bullard depict "the disgrace attending upon a Bachelor." That December Roger Newton examined "National prejudices." On the day following commencement two years later, Jonathan W. Edwards commented "on

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1790, December 9, 1790.

[4] See appendix for biographical data.

Literature" before William Brown concluded the celebration by discoursing "on Humanity." At the December meeting, Ebenezer Gay combined the themes of "Science, Friendship, & Morality." Although these brief indications do not evince enough of the addresses' contents to support a thorough analysis, they do corroborate the general trends manifested in the surviving speeches.[5]

None of the Phi Beta Kappa orators whose speeches still exist left collections of personal manuscripts like the ones chronicling the formative years of Simeon Baldwin and John Q. Adams. Without biographical detail and intimate reflections, the theoretical argument linking the ideas expressed in the addresses to the social context of the late eighteenth century has less proof. Conclusions about the orators' views must rely on sketches of their lives, inferences about what they learned in college, and general information about American development in this period. Nevertheless, this material does provide examples, similar to those in the previous chapter, of individuals struggling to shape their destinies within the limitations of historical conditions and the logical possibilities of the intellectual systems available to them. At the end of the 1780s, speakers at Phi Beta Kappa anniversaries discussed the methods they found desirable for dealing with divisive social, economic and political changes.

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[5] William Emerson, "An Oration, Delivered Sept. 5th 1789, in the Chapel of Harvard College, at the Request of the PBK Society," in "A Register of the Phi Beta Kappa," pp. 40-48, HUA; Thaddeus M. Harris, "On Literary and Benevolent Associations," Literary Miscellany 1(1805):5-8, and "An English Oration," HUA; Thomas W. Hooper, "An Oration Delivered at the Request of the PBK Society, at Cambridge, 1790," HUA. Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 11, 1788, December 5, 1788, September 9, 1790, December 9, 1790.

II

When William Emerson was born in 1769, his father was serving as a minister in Concord, Massachusetts. His maternal grandfather had previously held the same position. Emerson's parents, like the other inhabitants, were confronting the religious, land, and currency problems afflicting so many New England communties. Although agreement about leaving the British empire smoothed over some quarrels, war brought more disruptions. In 1776, Emerson's father, like a disconcerting number of household heads in Concord, died while on a military expedition. Preserving continuity for their children as well as for the church, his widow married his replacement, Ezra Ripley. The value of the minister's salary, supposedly tied to food prices, fluctuated during the war. In 1785 the town compensated Ripley with a lump sum, which perhaps had some connection to Emerson's graduation from Harvard four years later.[6]

Throughout the 1780s the people of Concord grappled with the difficulties of adapting their social and economic relationships to postwar trade patterns. Although they shared the grievances of their neighbors in the hinterlands of western Massachusetts, they did not feel sufficiently estranged from coastal commercial practices to support the armed protest known as Shays' Rebellion. By the end of the decade, Concord families were more successfully modifying their farm production and traditional household manufactures to accommodate increasingly specialized supply networks.[7]

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[6] Robert A. Gross, The Minutemen and Their World (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), pp. 105-8, 140-6, 153-4, 160-5; Lemuel Shattuck, A History of the Town of Concord (Boston: Russell, Odiorne & Co., 1835), pp. 188-9; Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36), 4:141; William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 9 vols. (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857-69) 8:241.

Responding to these social and economic tensions Harvard altered some of its requirements and methods of instruction between Adams's graduation in 1787 and that of Emerson in 1789. The nation, as well as local communities, sought certain qualities from the college's alumni. According to Adams, under the system he encountered, teachers discouraged conscientious scholars by dwelling on material that more frivolous undergraduates had neglected. The conflicts at Harvard about the amount of enlightened knowledge necessary for a degree now included demands that even the wealthy demonstrate internalized motivation to achievement. Recommendations changing the assigned classical works prodded tutors to tighten discipline instead of slowing the pace to ensure that their pupils mastered their lessons.

When the college authorities dismissed the financially irresponsible professor of natural philosophy in 1788, they restated the duties of the office. Their guidelines augmented the scope of lectures and designated the topics in mathematics and experimental science most pertinent for understanding the order and operation of the universe. In the same year, the language professor introduced the rhetoric text of Hugh Blair, a participant in the Scottish Enlightenment.[8]

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[7] Gross, Minutemen, pp. 171-81; Shattuck, History of Concord, pp. 129-42.

Because of Emerson's straitened circumstances, he received scholarship aid while at Harvard. For a time, he also held a job as a waiter in in the dining hall. After a major distrubance there on Thanksgiving Day in November 1787, Emerson lost his position because he refused to give evidence against the culprits. This incident, together with some punishments for neglect of his school work, do not completely explain the drastic action taken by the faculty a month later:

> It appearing that Emerson a Junior Sophister has been for some time past, very disorderly in his conduct, and has much disturbed the peace and good order of the Society,
>
> Voted, that his Father in Law the Rev. Mr. Ripley of Concord, be desired to take him from the College for the whole of the next term to prevent worse consequences and that he be desired to keep him under his own inspection and instruction; and that he be requested to take effectual care that he diligently pursue his studies during his absence.

If Emerson's stepfather had not voluntarily withdrawn him, this recommendation would have led to "rustication," the most severe form of discipline short of expulsion. The next spring Emerson rejoined his class. Despite such irregularities in his record, Emerson obtained some substantial assignments for college exhibitions. At his commencement, he took part in a conference, "upon the comparative influence of riches, knowledge and refinement of manner, in promoting the happiness of a Community."[9]

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[8] Louis F. Snow, The College Curriculum in the United States (New York: Teachers College, 1907), pp. 82-6; Josiah Quincy, The History of Harvard University, 2 vols. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, & Co., 1860), 2:279; William Charvat, The Origins of American Critical Thought, 1810-1835 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), pp. 40-7.

At this stage of development, a Harvard alumnus like Emerson might wish for a vocation devoted to literature, but he had to join John Q. Adams in lamenting the constraints requiring them to combine scholarly pursuits with a profession. After college, Emerson taught school in Roxbury to support his theological studies. His decision to follow the traditional career of his ancestors did not impose a standard as lofty as the one Adams found in his father. But more than most recent graduates who entered the law, Emerson had to work to secure his status within an occupation declining in prestige because of late eighteenth century changes. In eastern Massachusetts, religious liberalism somewhat mitigated the difficulties of reconciling literary aspirations with an increasingly insecure position in the clergy. Emerson had less cause than someone like Simeon Baldwin, contending with Connecticut's New Divinity, to resist family pressure to become a minister.[10]

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[9] Harvard College, Faculty Records 5:233, 236, 253, 263, 268, 269, 278, 282, 290, 295, 302, 305, 6:7, 19, 25, 37, HUA; Harvard College, Corporation Records, 3:256, 269, 279, 296, 320, 334, HUA.

Like Adams, Emerson needed a college degree just to attempt to maintain a genteel station in an unsettling period, even though he might inherit some intangible benefits from his forebearers. While his education could provide him with knowledge about the "natural laws" underlying the market economy, the corresponding cultural institutions had not yet developed sufficiently for him to depend on polite learning for an income, as his son would fifty years later. At the Phi Beta Kappa anniversary, Emerson urged members of his audience who might suffer harm from mistaken ambitions to cultivate "a taste, that shall enable them to bear with fortitude the calamities of life, & copiously to enjoy the smiles of fortune."[11]

In his speech to the Phi Beta Kappa, William Emerson expounded educational views reflecting both the content of his enlightened learning and his experiences of developing commercial and manufacturing relations in Concord. With Adams, the previous Harvard orator, Emerson shared not only an anxiety about the status accorded young professionals in a expanding nation, but also a conviction of reason's limitations: "If we examine with critical eye the condition of the greater part of men, it will seem as if chance, and not reason, had supplied them with motives of action." Due to a

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[10] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:241; Daniel H. Calhoun, Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), chap. 4.

[11] Emerson, "Oration," p. 46.

"delusive glare, that surrounds almost every object," even the educated could not know with absolute certainty that their perceptions of "the sensible world" corresponded to the actual order of the universe. Emerson worried about "the young and inexperienced", whose lack of judgment made them "apt to mistake the vagaries of fancy, for reason's dictates." Struggling to realize their true interests in an growing market economy, Americans could not tolerate either the "heedless precipitancy" or "wavering choice" that might result from intellectual confusion. Emerson deemed these two consequences of this philosophical flaw "injurious to ourselves, and to society at large."[12]

Unlike Adams, however, Emerson did not rely on reason, however weak, to keep ambitions modest. Instead he admonished his listeners to acquire "a genuine taste." For Emerson, this quality had a moral as well as an aesthetic aspect, that made it a principle governing "the conduct of human life." To comprehend their surroundings "through the medium of just propriety," he claimed, individuals needed to unite "the powers of reason, and of soul." If reason and nature did not ultimately correspond, college graduates trying to base their day-to-day decisions on scientific laws might misconstrue empirical data. For them, taste - "this spiritual, but not visionary being" - could posit a regularity, deduced from available information, in realms where inductive reasoning could not obtain evidence. "Possessing not only the attributes of sound judgment, but all the warmth of imagination," properly educated Americans would choose and advance toward goals Emerson found appropriate in a period of social and economic change.[13]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 41-44.

To a certain extent, Emerson's formulation resembled Baldwin's in the practical effects he expected from taste. Emerson granted everyone an innate capacity, ready for "laborious exertions" to develop: "Taste has its foundation in the organization of man. Its ingredients are all within us. Like truth, however, they lie deep, and must be drawn forth by painful assiduity." With "toil and perseverance" individuals could acquire the "virtuous habits" required for taste. Among them he included "the several duties of temperance, moderation, industry, and fortitude" - characteristics necessary for surviving in a prudent commercial republic. The "despair" of "indolent minds" Emerson declared disastrous both for the individual and the community in a transforming America.[14]

While admitting these possibilities for personal improvement, Emerson nonetheless revealed a connection between his fundamental doubts about rational order in the universe and his misgivings about mobility in late eighteenth century New England. To his criticism of Americans whose hopelessness kept them from acting, he linked a disapproval of "arrogance" consonant with Adams's treatment of ambition. By disparaging "universal taste", a presumption he defined as "a fruitless wish to become excellent in all things," he emphasized the diversity of talents even among those who correctly cultivated their capacities. College graduates, as well as the unschooled, Emerson insisted, should only strive in the direction of their "judicious choice." When individuals demonstrated bad taste by overestimating their abilities, he implied, they produced conflicts that injured themselves and other candidates for the professions: "Either from the lack of opportunity to discover the bent of native disposition, or from the wilful perversion of our judgment originate the evils of which we complain."[15]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 40-42.

[14] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

In his comments, Emerson attributed to uncalled for competition both the grievances lodged against increasingly aggressive lawyers in the 1780s and his own problems with hereditary privilege in the clergy. Adventurers were trying to enter the traditional careers, he asserted, because they lacked the taste to discern their proper place in society.

> To a failure in this respect may we impute all the scandal, justly thrown on useless and dishonary characters; which are made so by the mere circumstance of early placing themselves in a sphere, where, at the latest period, neither nature, nor propriety would have dictated their motion. Hence the professions are not seldom followed for the sake of convenience only, or that they might raise their incumbent one grade above the contemptible vulgar.

As a result of his situation and his understanding of Enlightenment philosophy, Emerson wanted to preserve some aspects of traditional hierarchies couched in terms of a division of labor congenial to expanding trade networks.[16]

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[15] Ibid., pp. 43, 45.

III

Similarly concerned about college graduates buffeted by chance in troubled times, Thomas W. Hooper emphasized the virtues of industriousness and honesty in his oration. Instead of the pressures to continue the legacy of a respectable profession put on Emerson, he faced the deterioration of a once magnificent family fortune. Before his birth in 1771, his parents had increased the substantial wealth allied by their marriage. His father had become one of the more successful among the merchants and shipbuilders responsible for Newburyport's growing importance in the West Indian trade. More than in Concord, where the residents exchanged local agricultural and manufactured goods for imports, the port's inhabitants participated in an international commerce allowing greater profits and correspondingly greater losses. Because of their privateering ventures in the War for Independence, the Hoopers, like most of the town's colonial leaders, slipped in rank when their creditors called in debts during the constriction that sparked violence in western Massachusetts. Still the second wealthiest family in Newburyport in 1786, the value of their holdings had fallen more than two-thirds by 1790. Having entered Harvard in 1785, Hooper was having trouble paying his bills two years later. Perhaps these unsettling family circumstances affected his behavior, because the college records also show numerous fines assessed for his absences from recitations, lectures, and prayers.[17]

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[16] Ibid., p. 44; Daniel W. Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 185-89; Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), chap. 7; Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 159.

In a letter to the Yale Phi Beta Kappa, the other Harvard orator in 1790 referred to "Brother Thomas Hooper, a student at law." After his graduation from Harvard in 1789, Hooper probably began to study with Theophilus Bradbury, a prominent Newburyport attorney, father of a former classmate and of his future wife. While no evidence suggests he ever practiced the profession, chronicles of the town's recovery from the depression of the 1780s indicate his efforts to make the most of his remaining inheritance in connection with the Bradburys. Rather than attempting to maintain his status through a law career, Hooper apparently preferred to apply the knowledge he obtained at Harvard by risking investments in the mercantile undertakings that brought prosperity to the Merrimac River. In his Phi Beta Kappa address, he recommended measures to rationalize an extended economic sphere.[18]

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[17] John J. Currier, History of Newburyport, 2 vols. (Newburyport: Newcomb and Gauss, Printers, 1906-9), 2:189-94, and "Ould Newbury": Historical and Biographical Sketches (Boston: Damrell and Upham, 1896), p. 153; Benjamin W. Labaree, Patriots and Parisans: The Merchants of Newburyport, 1764-1815 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 84, 213-14; Harvard College, Faculty Records 5:225, 240, 246, 267, 268, 276, 282, 295, 305, 6:7, 19, 27, HUA; John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, 17 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873-1975), 15:53-5.

Hooper went beyond Emerson in admonishing his audience to adopt "amiable and useful virtues" as bulwarks against adversity during "the present age of daring enterprise, and restless ambition." Confronting an inheritance diminished by wartime commercial risks, he expressed an ambivalence toward the problem of mobility. Hooper applauded the victories "of rising merit" over the "hereditary influence" obstructing Europeans. But because of chance, he insisted, respectability belonged to "the improvement of the talents we possess, rather than the degree with which we are favored." Partly Hooper's glorification of industriousness and honesty provided him with an excuse in case he failed to maintain his family's status. At the same time, he was advocating patterns of behavior that would reduce the uncertainties of a market economy.

Hooper asserted that human reason could not account for the inconsistencies in the universal order, including the inequalities he observed between people: "Nature has indeed been apparently somewhat capricious in the distribution of her gifts." In addition, Americans seeking wealth and power encountered postwar transformations he found difficult to calculate:

> The man, who toils for riches, is dependent on every wind of Heaven. While he, who is engaged in projects of ambition is still more dependent on the ever varying

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[18] Harris to Baldwin, August [September] 2, 1790; Currier, History of Newburyport, 2:227, and "Ould Newbury", pp. 153, 593-94, 711-12.

> breath of popular favor. Cruel anxiety & dreadful suspense are oftimes the companions of these pursuits.

Like the previous Harvard orators, Hooper warned young college graduates to beware of "delusion." Already perplexed in a world that reason could never fully analyze, they would become completely bewildered if they indulged their fantasies: "Enchanted by the pleasing dreams of imagination, and lulled by the soft, inglorious visions of fancy, we forget the more solid acquirements." Given the precariousness of life and the baneful consequences of disappointment, he counselled his listeners to assure themselves they had done everything possible: "If at length we are overwhelmed by the dangers, that surround us, the reflection, that it is not owing to any deficiency in ourselves will usher a beam, that will at least enliven the gloom of despondency, & oftimes scatter the cloud of despair."

Having recognized the weakness of reason, Hooper proposed a remedy consistent with Enlightenment philosophy. He offered the mercantile virtues, industry and honesty, as means of compensating for reason's fallibility. If Americans would regulate their actions by these standards, Hooper suggested, market relationships would attain the predictability of natural laws. He stressed the importance of diligent activity: "Exertion is the great hinge, on which turns the usefulness, the happiness of individuals, & the grand pillar, that supports the beauteous fabric of society." The attributes incorporated in the work ethic not only proved helpful in decreasing the uncertainties attending all sorts of commercial exchanges; they also took on particular significance in diminishing the risks of Newburyport's international trade.

Although Hooper did not include these qualities in the natural order, he believed mutual agreement could produce them. As enlightened individuals transformed traditional structures, they needed to know that others were striving to achieve similar ambitions, without resorting to rapacious or unscrupulous methods. According to Hooper's interpretation of the original contract, participants in a community had to rely on the efforts of their neighbors:

> Society has indisputably a right to command the services of its members. The social compact, while it encircles in the arms of its protection every individual, at the same time demands the exertion of each of its members, as a reward for the protection it yields his person, & property.

Assuming that each person conducting transactions would try to take into account everyone else's decisions, he stressed the wickedness of duplicity: "Honesty, the fair offspring of innocence, which produces confidence & security is greatly necessary to encourage the social intercourse, which alone advances the improvement of individuals, & gives energy to the bands of society." In an expanding market economy, the kind of success Hooper wanted required inculcating a respect for industry and honesty in other Americans.

To some extent Hooper's view of the developing republic simply required autonomous individuals who dealt with each other impersonally and rationally. Supposedly, anyone who calculated correctly, according to the principles available through education, could advance socially.

> The present situation of our country loudly demands and greatly encourages laudable exertion....The road to greatness is here open to everyone!...No tyrannic shackles check the flight of soaring genius....Merit here is the only road to greatness; exertion the only means of success.

Nevertheless, he did not rule out all the elements of ascribed status that worked to his advantage. Because Hooper admitted that nature created innate inequalities of talents, he employed the republican virtues in more traditional ways as well. Without declaring hierarchies hereditary, Hooper advised finding happiness in lowly stations. By distinguishing success from respectability, he exalted the nonmaterial rewards of cultivating the faculties one possessed: "Good conduct, when united with good principles, will at all times ensure respect. And the virtues of industry and honesty...will always prove unfading ornaments." Hooper acknowledged that these qualities did not necessarily accompany higher education and sought rather to inure all his compatriots to a sober spirit of enterprise that for him offset the inadequacies of Enlightenment philosophy.

In an instance related to his own family's situation, Hooper observed that the utmost prudence could never totally eliminate the role of chance under postwar economic conditions: "The bankrupt himself, if he has been industrious, is entitled to the relief of society." Traditionally commercial ventures only supplemented the basic sustenance of the household mode of production. Therefore, colonists who had incurred financial losses had born the consequences personally, even undergoing imprisonment. For Hooper, however, Americans like his father, having taken every foreseeable precaution, still met with misfortune because of forces beyond human control. Instead of submitting to the charity of their creditors, he asserted, bankrupts displaying the mercantile virtues had a right to forgiveness.

If society alleviated the despair of dutiful but unlucky entrepreneurs by declaring some disasters legitimate, then everyone could embrace the reliable habits that would make business routine. On the one hand, such arrangements opened speculation to more and more Americans by substituting a recourse under the laws for the protection provided by traditional structures. On the other hand, they could also benefit privileged individuals like Hooper, who was trying to preserve his social position by remaking his family's fortune during an era of economic transition.[19]

IV

Despite the dislocations they underwent because of American independence, Emerson and Hooper suffered little compared to Thaddeus M. Harris. Born in 1768, he experienced the prewar tensions in an increasingly urban setting. His father, who had attended Harvard without graduating, taught school in Charlestown before the battle of Bunker Hill. More concerned with commerce than subsistence agriculture, the townspeople there shared Boston's cycles of hardship and relief under British trade restrictions. Before Charlestown burned, the Harrises fled from their home to a small farming community north of Worcester, less vulnerable to invasion and food shortages. In 1778, while serving as a captain in the army, Thaddeus's father died, leaving the family with few resources. In this more rural economy, however, young Harris could exchange his labor for his schooling and keep in several households with more chores than children.[28]

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[19] Hooper, "Oration;" Peter J. Coleman, Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974); Ralph Lerner, "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 36(1979):3-26; Albert O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 49-66; Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), chaps. 2, 5; Gerald Stourzh, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp. 140-48.

Once Harris took responsibility for his own support, his mother had less control over him. Nevertheless, in 1782 she persuaded him to learn a mechanical trade, making saddletrees, instead of entering Harvard. Soon an accident prevented Harris from continuing in a manual occupation. So, he returned to school in Cambridge while working in the office of his maternal grandfather, clerk of the county court. A Harvard graduate himself, Thaddeus Mason claimed to have lost a comfortable estate in the burning of Charlestown. Although he occasionally came in conflict with new provincial policy makers, he provided his young namesake with valuable connections.[21]

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[28] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 8:320; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:215-16; Richard Frothingham, The History of Charlestown, Massachusetts (Charlestown, MA: C. R. Emmons, 1845-49), chaps. 25-30; David F. Allmendinger, Jr., Paupers and Scholars: The Transformation of Student Life in Nineteenth Century New England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 34.

With the financial help of patrons solicited by his teacher in Cambridge, Harris began college in 1783. There he still needed employment in order to meet his expenses, but he adhered to a pattern of mobility more typical for poor students than his earlier waverings between learning and labor. His classmate, John Q. Adams, described him in a diary entry: "His constitution is feeble, and his Circumstances pecunious, but his spirit is independent, and his mind is cheerful." Especially pressed for money at one moment, Harris found a gold ring, which he sold, considering it a gift from heaven, not another person's property. For him, the ring - inscribed "God speed thee, friend" - indicated that he would choose correctly in seeking a profession in the clergy. This providential blessing reinforced the confidence Harris derived from rising above an impoverished background through his own diligence and his patrons' generosity.[22]

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[21] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 8:320; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:216; Sibley and Shipton, Graduates of Harvard, 8:449-55.

[22] Allmendinger, Paupers and Scholars, pp. 12-13, 17-18, 31; Harvard College, Faculty Records 5:139, 142, 185, 189, 199, 211, 212, 228, 239, 243, 251, 272; Harvard College, Corporation Records, 3:241, 256, 269, 272, 279, 286, 299, 338; David G. Allen, Robert J. Taylor, Marc Friedlaen-

At his graduation from Harvard in 1787, Harris exhibited a poem. The following year he taught school in Worcester, Massachusetts. A case of smallpox prevented Harris from accepting an appointment as George Washington's secretary. Having returned to Cambridge to study theology, he became a licensed preacher in 1789. At the 1790 Harvard commencement, when Harris received his master's degree, he delivered a valedictory oration in Latin. The same year that he delivered his Phi Beta Kappa oration, he published a poem criticizing the hierarchy of learning in the Roman Catholic church for keeping the laity from interpreting scripture for themselves.[23]

With a different socioeconomic perspective on the War for Independence than the previous Harvard orators, Harris composed a Phi Beta Kappa address that contrasted with theirs. For him, a profession with duties that limited Emerson's literary ambitions opened up opportunities for polite education. Unlike Hooper, who stressed the republican virtues as the means of compensating for the weaknesses of reason reflected in commercial risks, Harris concluded that individuals only needed scientific learning and polished manners to unify their interests. Fundamentally,

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der, and Celeste Walker, eds., Diary of John Quincy Adams, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2:198; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:216-17.

[23] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 8:320-1; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:217; Harvard College, Faculty Records 5:259, 6:80; [Thaddeus M. Harris], The Triumph of Superstition: An Elegy (Boston: Isaiah Thomas & Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1790).

his treatment of Enlightenment themes resembled Baldwin's, but he concluded that worthy individuals like himself could ameliorate conditions without concerning themselves about national development. In his discourse, Harris reflected an optimism about human progess through enlightenment modeled on his own personal gains. Through their increasing knowledge of natural laws, he assumed, individuals aided only by voluntary associations would actualize the harmonious institutional organization that corresponded to the true rational order of the world. Although Harris sought to better his own position, he possessed a confidence in the power of intellect that could result in complacency about the historical situation.

Equating the characteristics that allowed him to advance in an expanding market economy with the immutable principles of human nature, Harris attributed existing difficulties to "ignorance, superstition and cruelty." In his view, organizations like the Phi Beta Kappa served not only as a paradigm for harmonious social relations but as the mechanism for eradicating perversions of the true order throughout the world:

> Literary and friendly associations have been found to strengthen reason, to confirm the judgment, to excite emulation; to warm the heart with sentiment, and store the mind with information; and to lead to philosophical precision, free from pedantry, and to complacency of manners, devoid of affectation.

Neither historically relative conditions nor any ultimate discord in the universe obstructed the progess of these enlightened standards, according to Harris. Cultural improvements, he claimed, would prevent the social, economic and political conflicts that occurred when "unnatural" institutions impeded postwar transitions.[24]

Harris's conjectures about the creation of learned associations in antiquity more accurately represented their origins in the period of independence.

> Political union began in motives of self defence, was strengthened by convenience and intercourse, and confirmed by the attachments of sympathy and affection. What commenced through necessity soon ripened into profit, and suggested establishments for improvements in useful and ornamental knowledge, in arts, refinement, and elegance.

He noted that such groups allied individuals who did not engage in what Adams called "an active profession," with those, like himself, pursuing scholarly ambitions. "Men of leisure and of thought began to reflect on the objects around them, and to examine that vast mansion, in which they found themselves existing." Such mutually beneficial arrangements brought respectability to the wealthy for supporting scientific endeavors and status to persons "of thought" who associated with their superiors. Harris assumed that innate impulses fortified conscious judgments much as the passions did for Baldwin: "The social principle is natural to the human breast, and leads man to form those connexions, which are the foundation of all that is noble in the human character, or endearing in the human condition." This "principle of sociability," he asserted, motivated individuals "to communicate their knowledge by conversing upon matters of speculation and science." For him, speculation was not anathema.[25]

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[24] Harris, "Associations," pp. 6, 8.

Following a classical genesis, Harris perceived an eclipse of learning in history. For him, the "dark" side of enlightened human nature caused the "dark ages" of civilization - "the ignorance, which would not be taught, the cruelty and lust of dominion, which would not be tamed, the luxury, which would not be bounded, and the licentiousness, which could not be checked." In effect, the forces that many Americans feared as threats to their republican experiment Harris translated back into traditional European institutions. Whenever individuals erred or disagreed, he could blame conflict on a lack of information or a surviving prejudice that benefited a privileged few at the expense of truth.[26]

In discussing the revival of the culture he admired, Harris distinguished between America's growing cosmopolitanism and European corruption. At first, learned associations had to thank "the wise and the noble" for granting "favor, protection, and assistance" to their efforts. As patrons of the arts and sciences, he named three powerful, if not despotic, rulers, "Leo the X, Charles V, and Louis XIV" - a pope and two French kings - and the "order of the Jesuits." By collecting such unrepublican examples from Europe, Harris could rejoice over his own country's capacity to promote enlightenment without decadence. Although he had availed himself of patronage networks in eastern Massachusetts, he denied that such structures in the United States presented any dangers. "The refinements of civilized life, unattended with that haughty magnificence, which renders them subservient to luxury, have now taken a residence in that Temple, which freedom has erected on the shores of America." Generalizing from his personal mobility through a college education, Harris assumed that the nation could throw off its provincialism by means of voluntary societies.[27]

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[25] Ibid., p. 5.

[26] Ibid., p. 6.

While he acknowledged the role of privilege in founding learned associations, Harris supposed that enlightened organizations of various sorts would ameliorate life for everyone. He praised his compatriots for joining "those humane, charitable, and friendly associations, whose design is to alleviate the sorrows and smooth the asperities of life; to promote candor of disposition and urbanity of manners." Harris shared some of Baldwin's awareness that the New England elite demanded polish as well as erudition from college graduates seeking advancement. "Immersed in solitary contemplations, the mind grows torpid, & we become at best but learned clowns and bigots; never distinguished for liberality of sentiment and manners, and never qualified for public business & social life." He too recognized that Americans needed both kinds of refinement to uphold their reputations against the standards of European civilization.[28]

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[27] Harris, "English Oration," and "Associations," p. 7.

In a passage eliminated when Harris's address appeared in the Literary Miscellany in 1805, he contended that as more and more people participated in institutions promulgating cosmopolitan knowledge and behavior, they would eliminate social and political conflict.

> It is fortunate for the cause of science in general, that, at the present day, prejudices lose much of their pristine obstinacy. Time has allayed the violence of party, and checked with cool discretion the tumults of opposition. Mankind, superior to national predilection, or the barriers of policy or priestcraft, begin to follow the genuine dictates of reason, and honor the sons of science, whatever be their nation or their creed.

By removing artificial obstacles that sustained ignorance and animosity, members of these organizations would reveal what Harris construed as humanity's ultimate unity.[29]

In the discourses surviving from 1789 and 1790, the orators combined various Enlightenment ideas in ways that reflected their personal situations and the specific historical context. William Emerson, preparing to take his place in a succession of ministers, and Thomas W. Hooper, striving to preserve the assets of a family once among Newburyport's wealthiest, both echoed Adams's warning about the delusions endangering educated youth. Thaddeus M. Harris, on the other hand, who fought against poverty and his widowed mother's wishes to acquire the education that would improve his station, followed Baldwin in asserting the power of knowledge. From the perspective of their early experiences in the towns around Boston, the three Harvard graduates interpreted transformations in the era of American independence.

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[28] Harris, "English Oration," and "Associations," p. 7. The version printed in the Literary Miscellany read "Immersed in solitary contemplations, the mind grows torpid, and the man becomes an useless member of society."

[29] Harris, "English Oration"; Alexandra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown, eds., The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815 (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), p. 212.

Emerson and Hooper both shared Adams's suspicions about Enlightenment philsophy's skeptical flaw. While Emerson modified an aesthetic concept to protect individuals with refined taste from the uncertainties of this situation, Hooper deployed the ideas he had imbibed at Harvard in a way calculated to help educated Americans benefit from a developing market economy. From the same system of instruction, Harris derived conclusions similar to Baldwin's about the essential harmony of the universe. Without the first Yale orator's interest in national expansion, he remained content to seek his own advancement through a means of cultivation he supposed was transforming the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

"...AS FAST AS REASON CAN PREVAIL OVER INTEREST AND PREJUDICE," 1791-93

After 1790, Americans indicated more and more clearly that they did not share a common vision of their country's future. In the philosophy available to them, individuals - whether formally schooled or not - found validation for the particular changes they wanted to institute. Moreover, the logic of Enlightenment thought sometimes spurred people to agitate for greater alterations of the social order than they may have demanded at first. Nationally and internationally, Americans struggled to establish versions of the laws of nature that often conflicted with each other.

I

In 1791, 1792 and 1793, the three Phi Beta Kappa societies sponsored eleven literary exhibitions. After the Yale organization decided it could honorably inaugurate public celebrations on the day after commencement in 1792, all chapters admitted outsiders to their anniversaries. That year even the December meetings at Yale began to include "a number of respectable gentlemen who had been previously invited, altho not members of the Society." In a letter to a Dartmouth officer, the performer on that occasion implied that the reputation of the Phi Beta Kappa had more to gain from their presence than any benefit these "literary characters of New Haven" might have enjoyed from the association's recognition.[1]

During this period, the Dartmouth records barely mentioned the spectators, noting "a numerous & respectable audience" in 1791 and merely a "numerous" one the following year. By comparison, descriptions of the persons of importance at the 1793 Harvard exercises seemed rather precise. The club's archives represented Henry D. Ward's listeners as "a very respectable audience, consisting of the Government of the University, the Members of the Society & various other Gentlemen of Character & respectability." A Boston newspaper, the Columbian Centinel, depicted this crowd somewhat more explicitly, observing "the Governours of the University, a number of the Reverend Clergy, and other Gentlemen, strangers." Although such details only hinted about the sorts of people who actually attended, these notices plainly demonstrated that the Phi Beta Kappa cared about public opinion.[2]

The terms commentators employed in extolling the discourses provided a few additional clues about their views of the institution. A Dartmouth secretary called the 1791 declamation "elegant" and in 1792 designated the offering "instructive & pleasing." Chronicling three times as many speeches, the Yale minutes scarcely added to the stock of adjectives but testified to the significance of a polished style. One entry declared Jonathan W. Edwards's oration "elegant." A second proclaimed Timothy Pitkin's talk "elegant & instructive" in one place and "elegant & entertaining" in another. In a similar vein, the Harvard records linked a concern for refinement with an emphasis on vitality, labelling Joseph Bartlett's address "elegant & spirited." Other passages used the word "spirited" twice to compliment John Phillips's performance and cited Ward's as "elegant" once and "elegant and animated" a second time.[3]

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[1] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," July 2, 1792, September 13, 1792, December 7, 1792, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT (hereafter YUA); Elijah Waterman to the President of the PBK Dartmouth College, December 17, 1792, copy, YUA.

[2] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 24, 1791, August 21, 1792, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 18, 1793, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA; Columbian Centinel, July 20, 1793.

Features of two Cambridge exhibitions garnered praise that further specified the accomplishments desirable for the Phi Beta Kappa to promote. In the Boston Argus, an article about Bartlett's presentation accented both the form and the content. According to this source, the piece manifested "the most ingenious flights of fancy, and strength of judgment." In other words, Bartlett not only displayed a knowledge of the world and a set of values which the reporter considered correct but also communicated his ideas in a way that captured the audience's attention.

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[3] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 24, 1791, August 21, 1792; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 9, 1791, September 13, 1792; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," September 7, 1791, July 19, 1792, July 18, 1793.

> In a most happy manner, he delineated the different characters of mankind, and while the virtuous and the wise received his applause, the vicious and the ignorant were lashed with deserved censure. In this Oration was contained every thing which could please and improve mankind.

The official account of this speech remarked on the favorable reaction to it as a work of politeness, "universally admired for its wit & sensibility." Two years later a chapter scribe, lauding Ward's composition for "eminently combining the beauties of language & sublimity of sentiment," reinforced these standards of Enlightenment rhetoric and aesthetics.[4]

Only one Phi Beta Kappa oration survived from each of these three years, all delivered at Yale. The archives contain the themes of the missing discourses heard in New Haven. On the day after commencement in 1791, Joseph Strong examined "the advantages of Contemplation." In December of the following year, the society listened to another evaluation of abstract learning when Elijah Waterman considered "the general influence of philosophy, at the present day & its influence together with morality, in the settlement of the New England states & particularly Connecticut." In an official letter, the speaker himself paraphrased his topic as "the causes of the difference of manners & customs among nations." The next winter Jeremiah Atwater shifted the emphasis to the sophistication of cultivated persons, appraising "the LUSTRE which talents derive from PURITY of manners." During this period the Dartmouth minutes still did not mention the subjects treated at the celebrations there. According to the Harvard records, a discussion of "happiness" formed the material for Bartlett's offering. An entry for 1792 stated that Phillips turned the occasion to a "vindication" of the Phi Beta Kappa as an institution. In 1793, when Ward inveighed against "the destructive consequences of war," the title obviously marked a potentially controversial call for reform.[5]

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[4] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 18, 1793; Boston Argus, September 9, 1791.

The Phi Beta Kappa members who gave these eleven speeches possessed personal attributes that corresponded quite closely to the previous pattern. In fact, one had performed for the society before. With this veteran as the youngest, their ages still spread from nineteen to twenty-nine. All but one were born after the passage of the Stamp Act and before the Boston Tea Party. This exception, the twenty-nine-year-old, also was one of the two persons in this group to graduate from college before the Constitutional Convention. At Yale, the two youngest exhibitors were continuing their education by means of a graduate fellowship. For the first time in the short history of these festivities, a speaker was studying medicine. Another headed an academy and edited a newspaper in the early 1790s.

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[5] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," September 15, 1791, December 7, 1792, December 9, 1793; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," September 7, 1791, July 19, 1792, July 18, 1793; Waterman to President of PBK Dartmouth College, December 17, 1792.

Among the rest, teaching also played an important role, both as a temporary means of support and as a calling for which supplementary credentials, usually theological ones, were necessary. Although all but two prepared for careers in either the law or divinity at some point, these individuals ventured beyond the traditional professions somewhat more than the orators in preceding years.[6]

The lives of the speakers whose addresses still exist - Jonathan W. Edwards, Timothy Pitkin and William Johnson - reflected the conflicts that arose from national development in the early 1790s. They demonstrated how their philosophy's rational and empirical components could support diverse stances. Manifesting little of his family's traditional concern about religious contests, Edwards relied on a theory of the passions that allowed him to ignore the inconveniences of logical consistency in his views. Pitkin and Johnson, on the other hand, celebrated reason for accomplishing opposing goals - bracing inherited prominence in Pitkin's case and opening opportunities for mobility in Johnson's. In fact, these orators apparently did not advance any notions terribly distasteful to their audiences. However, all three expounded arguments with potentially disruptive implications.[7]

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[6] See appendix for biographical data.

[7] Jonathan W. Edwards, "Oration Before the PBK"; Timothy Pitkin, "An Oration"; William Johnson, "An Oration."

II

Named for his grandfather, the formidable theologian, and for his father, a New Divinity minister, Jonathan W. Edwards had lived in New Haven since his birth in 1772. During those years, he saw many of the city's inhabitants prospering from the revitalizing Caribbean trade. The society where Simeon Baldwin had sought polished company in the 1780s had obtained an additional lustre. A calico printer set up across from the Edwards manse exemplified various efforts to establish manufactures, especially in cloth and buttons. While trying out new enterprises, New Haven's residents engendered conflicts that affected all aspects of community life.[8]

In this social and economic milieu, most members of his father's church left to join more congenial congregations. Inflexibly devoted to his theology and the practices he deduced from it, the pastor even refused to deviate from his planned sermon when President Washington attended his service. With his own father demonstrating the declining status of the clergy, Edwards would have felt less impetus than someone like William Emerson to adhere to family tradition in choosing a profession.[9]

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[8] Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 6 vols. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1885-1912), 4:636; Edward E. Atwater, ed., History of the City of New Haven (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1887), pp. 494, 532-34; Gaspare J. Saladino, "The Economic Revolution in Late Eighteenth Century Connecticut" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964), passim, especially pp. 63-65.

Unhampered by the wartime dislocations Baldwin experienced while at Yale, Edwards availed himself of an education based on the same enlightened priciples. In the 1780s, Ezra Stiles continued to combine methods of instruction that would ready students to contend with late eighteenth century developments. Aided in some endeavors by a full complement of qualified tutors, the president still held primary responsibility for lecturing. Although the divinity professor appointed in 1782 began his pastoral care of the college church auspiciously, he suffered from an increasingly debilitating illness. For six months in 1787, a former tutor living in New Haven lectured on natural philsophy but he did not join the faculty permanently until 1794.

Throughout the decade, the undergraduates recited the same subjects Baldwin had, with a few in the textbooks. As at Harvard, they began to ground their knowledge of literature on Blair's Lectures. Convinced that his scholars needed the sciences more than the polite accomplishments Baldwin had pursued, Stiles excluded fashionable works of belles lettres from the required curriculum. Nevertheless, he did not prohibit outside reading by students preparing disputations, declamations, and extracurricular exercises. Now and then, despite Stiles's respect for open discussion of controversial issues, differences between undergraduates and the administration resulted in disobedience - even vio-

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[9] Robert L. Ferm, Jonathan Edwards the Younger: 1745-1801 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), chaps. 5, 9.

lence - and punishment. Particularly in regard to the stringency of examinations, constituent interests in the higher education community disagreed about the learning appropriate for young Americans at the end of the eighteenth century.[10]

After his graduation from Yale in 1789, Edwards achieved some measure of financial independence with a fellowship that allowed him to continue his studies. Stiles awarded him the scholarship after an academic competition, presumably judged without any consideration for name or need. Secure about his personal ability to function well in a world governed according to his interpretation of Enlightenment knowledge, he saluted the passion for liberty in a Phi Beta Kappa oration that held up the freedoms he enjoyed as the universal model. Although he acquired no lasting fame for his intellectual endeavors, Edwards went on to become a successful lawyer in Hartford.[11]

With essentially the same college education that underpinned Baldwin's version of Enlightenment philosophy, Edwards tipped the balance between the reason and the passions. He supposed that the general state of scientific advancement allowed everyone - regardless of educational level - to discern the natural order. In Edwards's view, people could safely act as their spirits moved them because "liberty is the ruling passion of the Age." He expected the world's inhabitants to act according to universal principles of justice and freedom once they realized the significance of the facts around them. Unfortunately, Edwards demonstrated that he had trouble distinguishing cosmic truths from his personal predilections. With this construction of Enlightenment ideas, he could pursue the studies and profession he preferred without worrying whether he should be promoting humanity's well-being in some other way.

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[10] Edmund S. Morgan, The Gentle Puritan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 374-75, 427, 386-99, 402-3.

[11] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 4:636-37, and The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 3:353.

In his account of the War for Independence, Edwards illustrated how he could manipulate his empiricism so that it substantiated his own inclinations. He attributed the Americans' victorious fight against imperial rule to their provincialism. Because of their physical isolation, he concluded, the colonists avoided intellectual error: "they were not habituated to the arbitrary ideas that are so familiar to every class of Europeans." His assertions about their uniqueness rested on rather dubious evidence. "They were unacquainted with the mock-divinity of kingly power and splendor and as a Nation not within the contagious atmosphere of Ministerial corruption." According to Edwards, the colonists went to war when they recognized the fallacy behind British control: "Their distance from England showed them that they were not dependent." They found the courage for battle, he further maintained, from beholding the natives whose lands they now occupied: "the contrast between themselves and the savages of the Forest inspired them with ideas of their own bravery and strength." For him, his country's independence marked the beginning of liberty's reign. "The Morning of the Age opened with the dawnings of American Glory."

Edwards revealed an even greater historical shortsightedness in his evaluation of the French Revolution. The impulse he had traced to New World provincialism presumably became a contagious passion that roused formerly benighted Europeans. "The flame of liberty flashed from America and kindled France." He claimed for the French a unity in abandoning traditional institutions which neither they nor the British colonists ever attained. "The same spirit that inspired the Americans animated twenty six millions of Frenchmen to assert their natural rights in opposition to a national attachment to monarchy and the Royal family." In this number of "Frenchmen", Edwards included women and children, revolutionaries and royalists. With such generalizations, he indicated his ability to disregard internal conflicts that jarred his preconceptions.

Edwards praised the French struggle's lack of violence compared to the American war. "It was not attended with so many scenes of horror and bloodshed, and it has been established without so much internal & foreign opposition." From the perspective of 1791 his appraisal had a certain accuracy. Edwards did not anticipate any further upheaval there because in his estimation it had achieved the criterion of perfection set by the United States. "The inhabitants of France and America have no reason to complain either of restraint on natural liberty or of religious intolerance. They are free from every compulsion but of the Laws - free to do good, but not to do evil." Although he lived in a state with a limited franchise and an officially-sanctioned church, he could not comprehend the frustrations of his neighbors still subject to legal disabilities. Nor could he foresee the consequences of the French people's demand for equality and fraternity in addition to the degree of liberty they had already exacted.

When Edwards discussed the spread of this drive for freedom to other nations, he most clearly manifested the contradictory potential in his formulation of Enlightenment philosophy. After commending improvements in Poland, England, Spain and Portugal, he applauded recent slave revolts in the Caribbean. His disapproval of human bondage probably disturbed few in a community with an antislavery organization that included Ezra Stiles and Edwards's father. The latter had collaborated with Simeon Baldwin's eldest brother on a series of newspaper articles on the subject in the early 1770s. Edwards was, however, employing concepts that would evoke outrage if applied to a local situation instead of a foreign one. Even he might not have accepted the logical implications for his own society of the arguments he mustered in defense of "the unhappy negroes contending against the indian planters for their unalienable rights."

In this case, he decided, the atrocities the planters had perpetrated justified extreme acts of retribution when the blacks' natural passions burst forth: "They have long been most cruelly oppressed and treated with more barbarity than even the brutes. But the day, the long expected day of vengeance has arrived and those barbarties which they have suffered shall be inflicted on their merciless tyrants." Edwards provided an added basis for objection in his description of the slaves' motivations. "They are unskilled in the arts of Refinement, untaught their rights and privileges; but the principles of nature teach them that they are men and if they will fight in a good cause they are Freemen." If such subjugated persons possessed the qualities necessary for actualizing the true order of the universe, then the guidance educated individuals could provide diminished in value.[12]

Unlike Baldwin, who had required a large measure of human effort in his idea of perfectability, Edwards made civilization's enlightenment seem virtually automatic.

> In whatever point of view we look at mankind, we see them emerging from the gloom of slavery and rising into freedom and independence. Science pentrates into the remotest obscurest regions of the world and freedom will ever reign in Countries enlightened by Learning. We may indeed consider the present age as the forerunner of the happiest period that ever blessed Mankind. If we look forward into the Realms of future existence we have a

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[12] Morgan, Gentle Puritan, p. 452; Ferm, Edwards the Younger, pp. 93-95; William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 9 vols. (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1857-69) 1:638; James D. Essig, "Break Every Yoke: American Evangelicals Against Slavery, 1770-1808" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1978).

> prospect of the happy golden ages, when all Nations shall be free.

Although he did not become apathetic about his own future, with this intellectual system he could attend to his personal interests content that the millennium was approaching and unmindful that the passions he esteemed might also stimulate some Americans who resented his advantages.[13]

III

When Timothy Pitkin addressed the Phi Beta Kappa, he had reached a different stage of his career than Edwards had. At the age of twenty-six, he had already practiced law and was serving as a representative in the state assembly. He came from a refined and well-connected Connecticut family that had sometimes gained and sometimes lost in eighteenth century struggles. About the time of his birth in 1766, his paternal grandfather won reelection as governor in recognition of his opposition to the Stamp Act. The same year his mother's father, Thomas Clap, resigned from Yale's presidency in the face of student protest. Meanwhile, other Pitkin relatives were flourishing in some of Connecticut's earliest manufacturing ventures, particularly in cloth, gunpowder and glass.[14]

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[13] Edwards, "Oration"; Nicholas Phillipson, "Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment," in City and Society in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Paul S. Fritz and David Williams (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), pp. 138-42.

[14] Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36), 14:639-41; Louis L. Tucker, Puritan Protagonist: President Thomas Clap of Yale College (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 247-59;

During Timothy's youth in Farmington, a prospering agricultural community, his father served as a minister amidst growing unpopularity. By 1790, the town's traders were connecting hinterland farmers with West Indian merchants on the coast. An increasingly sophisticated congregation challenged their pastor's customary authority until his dismissal in 1785, the year Timothy graduated from college. Relieved from pressure to take up a religious vocation, young Pitkin - like Edwards - entered the law profession, profiting from his family's remaining prestige in his literary and scientific pursuits.[15]

After the turn of the century, he established his present reputation with his scholarly publications - *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America* and a history of the country from 1763 to 1797. In his address to the Yale Phi Beta Kappa, Pitkin emphasized education as a prerequisite for understanding the natural order. For him, correct reasoning could only sanction the newly-established political structures of the United States that benefited cultivated individuals like himself.[16]

Thomas C. Pitkin, *Memoir of Timothy Pitkin* (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1881), pp. 4, 6.

[15] Johnson and Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 14:639; Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 2:129-31; Mabel S. Hurlburt, *Farmington: Church and Town* (Stonington, CT: Pequot Press, 1967), pp. 29-34; T. C. Pitkin, *Memoir*, pp. 5-6; J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., *Memorial History of Hartford County* 2 vols. (Boston: Edward L. Osgood, 1886), 2:176-77, 185.

[16] Johnson and Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 14:639; Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 4:437-39;

Like Edwards, Pitkin confirmed his privileged position in his oration, but he deployed a different blend of Enlightenment ideas. Agreeing that humans could act on natural principles, Pitkin devalued the passions and emphasized the importance of education in a discourse on "the advantages resulting to mankind from the cultivation & improvement of their rational faculties." Although he benefited from his family's now declining clerical prestige, he displayed more gratitude for the stature he derived from his relatives' successes in manufacturing and government. In his speech, Pitkin patterned all legitimate social relationships on the voluntary compacts and reasoned calculations that characterized commercial transactions. Supported by enlightened philosophy, he assumed that anyone given a substratum of learning would accept as the universal model the Connecticut structures that worked to his advantage.

Having acquired the erudition necessary for the New England elite, Pitkin unambivalently rejected the hereditary class distinctions still entrenched in Europe in favor of the personal attachments youths forged at provincial colleges. He extolled organizations like the Phi Beta Kappa for "forming an intimate connection between their members, not only before but after they leave those seats of Literature." In order to advance the development on which polite accomplishments depended, Americans were constructing associations "for the promotion of Arts, Sciences, Agriculture,

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T. C. Pitkin, Memoir, p. 7.

Manufactures, Commerce & Politics, & likewise for the relief of suffering humanity."

For the contractual system Pitkin envisioned to function correctly, all of the nation's inhabitants had to regulate their conduct by means of agreements grounded on scientific knowledge. Other countries erred, he insisted, in their attempt to promote the docility of "the largest class of the Community" by having the poor "designedly kept in ignorance." In the United States, laws spurred their active cooperation in a rationalized arena of exchange by providing schooling "at the public expense." "Learning more or less is diffused through all ranks and classes of our Citizens. Universities, Colleges, Academies & schools, are scattered throughout the United States." To these institutions Pitkin ascribed not only "the peace, order & harmony of the government" but also the citizens' "bold and adventurous spirit," essential for an expanding republic. According to him, Americans were contributing to the growth of the new federal union because they had sufficient cultivation to ascertain fundamental natural laws.

Pitkin's reason repudiated traditional hierarchies yet justified inequalities based on contract, including the offices and honors he and his family held. Invoking Enlightenment doctrine, he conceded an innate parity among individuals (at least for males). But Pitkin carefully distinguished between unnatural and artificial distributions of authority, seemingly insensible to the pretexts for exploiting the unfortunate inherent in his argument.

> All men, being born equally free, nature has made no disparity in civil rights between them: whatever differences, therefore, in civil or political rights have arisen among men, they are merely artificial; and where these differences do not arise from compact, from the consent of the people, they are of a base origin, & must be considered unnatural & unjust.

Belittling the reciprocal obligations protecting the uneducated in premodern society, he labelled almost all previous regimes despotic, "instituted for the purpose of enabling the strong & powerfull, to oppress the weak & the defenceless, in order to gratify their pleasure or their ambition."

In contrast to Edwards, Pitkin believed instruction necessary for freedom: "By a general diffusion of knowledge, mankind are naturally led to an acquaintance with their rights,...[and] when Mankind once become acquainted with their true interest, they generally will pursue it." Those qualified to judge, he presumed, would select the plan of sovereignty in which he was serving as a ruler. "Enlightened minds seem at present to agree, that a Representative Government is...the most rational & just."

In applying these generalizations to politics in the United States, Pitkin revealed some of the problems arising from his version of Enlightenment thought. Describing the motives for American independence, he stressed the deductions of educated reason where Edwards had put empirical observation: "We had recourse to first principles. Our reasoning on the subject, unbiassed by ancient prejudices or party Interests, was genuine, was just." Pitkin not only surmised that all properly informed individuals, unencumbered by despotism, could perceive nature's underlying design; he contended that the colonists had actualized the true order of the universe when they declared independence. In his account of the nation's founding, therefore, he minimized the effect of passions and preconceptions. Exalting the Constitution as "the noblest monument of human wisdom, that History ever recorded," Pitkin disregarded the strife involved in its ratification. "Never before had the world seen a convention of Men, in a cool, dispassionate manner, discussing subjects of such infinite moment to the happiness of Millions. Never before had it seen a form of government established in a calm, deliberate way, by the United voice of the people." Supposing a harmony that never existed, he proved no better than rds in discerning the potential for people with opposing convictions to duplicate his logic in their own causes.

Pitkin most vividly exemplified this tendency to equate his preferences with natural laws in his delight over France's campaign to disestablish the Roman Catholic Church. Less troubled by religious than economic errors, he lamented the waste of otherwise productive lives and possessions.

> Monasteries & Cloisters, those places of idleness & dissipation, founded upon the mistaken piety of ignorant & superstitious devotees, and which had engulphed one fifth of all the property of the kingdom, will soon be no more. No longer will it be deemed worshipping their Creator, to live a life of Celibacy & idleness.

With a secular world on the orator's model, no one would willingly choose to escape it or to improve it through vows of poverty and chastity. Unmarried until 1801, Pitkin seemed most pleased that "the fair females of France, will now no longer, under mistaken notions of piety, or by the Mandates of a cruel Father, contrary to their inclinations, & prospects of happiness, be compelled to take the veil, & drag out a life of solitude & sorrow." Their American counterparts, "whose enlightened minds are peculiarly susceptible of all the finer feelings of humanity," he predicted, would "undoubtedly rejoice at a Revolution by which so many of their sex, formed for social life, & to give the last polish to Society, are liberated from the gloomy, solitary cells of Superstition." Matching Simeon Baldwin in his eagerness to free women from "irrational" traditional institutions, he too managed to ignore any implications of his contractual ideology that suggested rights for women as individuals rather than as members of a household unit.

Oblivious to the more radical conclusions possible from his philosophical method, Pitkin overlooked the dangers of unwelcome change because of his faith in education as an instrument of reform. He firmly believed that individuals would rectify the injustices he condemned "as fast as Reason can prevail over Interest and prejudice." For him, "the abolition of Slavery" could "derive from the light of science."

> That this practice of enslaving their fellow-Creatures, should be introduced among barbarous nations, in times of ignorance & superstition, is not so much to be wondered at. But that such a practice should continue & be tolerated in an enlightened age, & by nations, who boast of having attained the summit of rational perfection, to

the reflecting mind, is truly astonishing.

Even wars would cease with "the extension of Commerce & Science," he trusted: "as soon as Mankind in general become acquainted with the duties, which they owe their Neighbours,...it will be impossible to convince them of the Justice of butchering their neighbours." Pitkin no more expected the increase of trade behind his family's power to promote international discord than he anticipated rational individuals to disagree about the true order of the universe.[17]

IV

The speaker at Yale the following year, William Johnson, became better known for his records of the new nation's institutions than for his work as an attorney. Reporter for the highest New York courts, he compiled more than thirty volumes of cases, including those decided by Baldwin's correspondent, James Kent. Of his early life, however, little information exists. Born in 1769 in Middletown, Connecticut, he belonged to a respectable family without wealth or influence. Although the town had entered the West Indian trade around the middle of the eighteenth century, after the War for Independence its enterprising residents could not match the commercial opportunities offered in nearby Hartford.[18]

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[17] Pitkin, "An Oration."

[18] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 10:128; Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 4:607-8; History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J. B.

After his graduation from Yale in 1788, he studied law in Middletown and then moved to New York City. The New York Supreme Court admitted him as an attorney on April 29, 1793, although the city directory did not list him as a resident until 1794. It then showed him residing with his two older brothers, merchants deeply involved in the government securities speculations that had precipitated the nation's first financial panic in 1792. Glorifying the power of human reason in his Phi Beta Kappa oration, Johnson assumed that he could turn social conflicts to his own advantage. So long as government guaranteed individuals political equality, he argued, they need not fear growing economic inequality.[19]

Discarding Pitkin's emphasis on education, William Johnson demonstrated how a similar interpretation of human reason and passions could support opposing views about America's future. In his attempt to prove that "the extension of our credit and commerce, and the increase of our national wealth" did not endanger "the duration and perfectability of the republican system of government," he repudiated the con-

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Beers & Co., 1884), pp. 85, 87; David D. Field, Centennial Address (Middletown, CT: William B. Casey, 1853), pp. 61-62; James C. Wetmore, The Wetmore Family of America (Albany: Munsell & Rowland, 1861), p. 485. William Johnson apparently had no connection either with the family of Samuel Johnson, the early Yale graduate who converted to Anglicanism and later became president of Columbia, or with any of the powerful Schenectady Johnsons.

[19] William Johnson to John Woodworth, October 29, 1789, YUA; William Duncan, New York Directory, and Register (New York: T & J Swords, 1794), pp. 97, 263; Joseph S. Davis, "William Duer, Entrepreneur," in Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), chap. 7.

nection between economics and politics taken for granted by many Americans.

> Nations, it is said, in their infancy, are robust and vigorous; but when civilization and refinement are increased, luxury debilitates, corruption destroys, and a speedy dissolution ensues....Hence, many great and learned men have been led to condemn foreign commerce, and the arts of polished life as the causes of this corruption, insisting, that...a pastoral or agricultural state, only,...can possess security and virtue.

Even financial adventurers like Johnson's brothers rarely launched direct attacks on this theory, preferring simply to ignore it in practice. Careful to controvert the predictions of "classic authors" instead of Biblical prophets, he denied that in the divine plan "misery and ruin" would follow wealth and politeness "as men cultivate the talents given them by their Creator." Johnson criticized Americans who congratulated themselves for their austerity when a subsistence economy limited opportunities for indulgence. "Mere exemption from the vices of a state he never knew, makes the virtues of a savage." Separating the concept of luxury from its conventional relation to the common good, he redefined it as "the refinement of enjoyment" by private individuals. For Johnson, evil arose not from self-aggrandizement itself but from "powerful and destructive passions" that overwhelmed calm calculations of interest. Faulting actions "governed by present appetite or passion more than reason," he sought to legitimate increased social and economic mobility with the same philosophical framework that had protected Pitkin's inherited stature.

Echoing Pitkin in his tribute to "the deliberate exercise of wisdom," Johnson tried to reconcile acquisitiveness with republicanism. Decline was inevitable only in a "government that chance has thrown upon the world," he maintained. If the founders adhered to "the immutable laws of nature and the principles of social improvement," they could construct "a political institution,...which should endure as long as society itself."

> In the great mass of the nation, there is, always, a fund of talent and integrity which, brought into action, is sufficient to regulate the machine; and to prevent the effects of temporary ignorance or corruption. There is an ever active principle of rejuvenescence, which supplies every partial waste, and invigorates the political body, by the accession of knowledge and strength in every succeeding generation.

Once established correctly, Johnson's ideal state would operate mechanically, independent of the economic or moral condition of particular inhabitants.

Behind this confidence in a polity conforming to the natural order lay a preconception about education far different from Pitkin's. Without special training, citizens of a free country would prove capable of exercising sovereignty, according to Johnson. "Each individual becomes equal to the importance of his political situation, as a member of the association." He believed that humans only forfeited their innate ability to reason accurately when bondage enslaved them to passion and custom. "By long and habitual servitude, man almost, loses his nature. He regards what is antient, not what is right. He becomes a creature of instinct, not of reason."

For Johnson, "the corruption and ruin of nations" resulted not from economic development but from "the injustice and inequality of governments." By "political distinction" he meant "excluding one class of the people from a participation in the rights of citizens" and endowing a few with hereditary prerogatives. "Depress one part of the community, and give to the other distinctions and privilege, and you sow the seeds of endless hatred, jealousy, and disorder."

Johnson denounced efforts to remedy this volatile situation with "the heterogeneous mixture of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, in which originated the notion of a balance, as necessary to maintain peace between opposite and hostile powers." Averse to permanently ensconcing artificial estates in discrete political organs, Johnson disavowed the value of a "studied opposition between established parties to preserve liberty or the constitution." Advocating a separation of the government's various branches, he castigated Hume for declaring "dependence and corruption... essential" to the parliamentary process. Johnson narrowed the usual republican meaning of these terms in a specific reference to the crown's manipulation of the House of Commons with patronage. Despite his trust in the people as a whole, he argued against a "pure democracy," recommending "the expedient of representation" for controllng "a polished and commercial" society in an "enlarged territory."

Guarded from these political errors, Johnson's republic could encourage general prosperity by allowing individuals to enjoy "the fruits of their different talents and various industry" regardless of the distribution of wealth. He pilloried measures "to maintain an equal division of property, by an agrarian law, or by restrictions on the liberty of individual acquisition." For Johnson, the rational order of the universe decreed virtually unrestricted economic competition in which the same rules applied to everyone: "equal right, or the principle that gives each man his due, and excludes all useless restraint, is that eternal and immutable law, on which a system of public peace and felicity may rest with security." Without such aristocratic vestiges as primogeniture and entail, nature would eliminate any unfair edge the rich might bring to an open contest for material possessions. "Let the laws of inheritance be equal," Johnson pleaded. "There are moral causes sufficient, gradually, to produce every desirable effect.... Successful speculation may, for a time, accumulate a disproportionate share of wealth; yet in a few years, its proprietor is gone, and it subsides to the general level." In his zeal to destroy corporatist obstacles to the aspirations of ambitious Americans like himself, he could not imagine that the free market might also generate inequities hazardous to the state's stability.

Heedless of the disparities international trade engendered, Johnson praised it for destroying feudalism's fixed ranks and hereditary disabilities. "By a slow, yet unceasing operation, commerce has been gradually diminishing this inequality, and diffusing a portion of freedom and wealth to the other members of the community." If each merchant obeyed universally-valid dictates of reason, all would profit from a peaceful and harmonious system, he presumed. "Men, in the enlightened parts of the world, will, now, be able to act in concert, for the security of their rights and the preservation of general happiness." But Johnson underestimated individual greed and imperial aggressiveness. Invoking republican objections to standing armies and the public debt necessary to maintain them, he asserted that Americans could expand their exchange of goods abroad without becoming involved in European wars. He blamed convulsions overseas on irrational forms of political organization. Therefore he fancied that independence from English dominion would exempt the United States from any obligation to augment its sphere of influence by force, whatever its citizens' private interests.[20]

By assaulting republican premises with an affirmation of reason's efficacy, Johnson exemplified the tendency among Phi Beta Kappa orators to enter into the increasingly intense controversies of the 1790s. Discounting the role of education, he expected to benefit from the opportunities commercial growth offered to ordinary Americans. In his discourse, Johnson displayed the same understanding of human passions and intellect that Pitkin had employed to keep political and intellectual leadership within the existing elite. A short time before, Edwards had reversed these elements of Enlightenment philosophy in order to excuse the weak reasoning behind his self-seeking pursuits. Despite the potential in these polemics to justify radical or obstructionist positions, the speakers' opinions apparently did not shock their audiences.

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[20] Johnson, "An Oration."

CHAPTER FIVE

"MANY CHAMPIONS HAVE STEPPED FORTH INTO THE FIELD...,"

1794-95

Apparently only two Phi Beta Kappa addresses have survived from 1794 and 1795. Each speaker used the occasion to advocate a specific reform. At Harvard Charles Coffin assailed the practice of duelling. In the earliest existing Dartmouth oration, Seth Williston asserted the rights of animals. The styles in which they expressed their views differed dramatically. While Williston argued in the language of New Divinity theology, Coffin adopted an ironic tone suited to polite literature, pretending to vindicate the custom he was attacking. Both, however, employed Enlightenment ideas in their efforts to gain support for their positions. By attributing suffering and injustice to the particular evils they deplored, they generally neglected the deeper roots of the problems. Exertions on behalf of such causes often aggravated conflicts within American society.[1]

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[1] Charles Coffin, "Essay on Duelling," Literary Miscellany 2(1806):363-69, and "Brother Coffin's Anniversary Oration, 1794," in Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "A Register of the Phi Beta Kappa," pp. 63-70, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA (hereafter HUA); Seth Williston, "Cruelty Towards the Bestial Race Discountenanced, and Humanity

I

Unfortunately, the chapter records can not prove whether the five missing discourses from the period resembled the two that remain. Accompanying Coffin at the 1794 Harvard anniversary, Josiah Quincy presented "a retrospective view of man." The Yale minutes noted the topics of the two Phi Beta Kappa speeches given there during these years. At a delayed December celebration, actually held on January 6, 1795, James Gould delivered remarks "on the origin and primitive improvements of Historical Records, together with a variety of miscellaneous reflections relative to their influence on the human character and the early state of Society." The following winter Josiah Stebbins analyzed "the happy effects of a virtuous conduct upon society." No other available information discloses the particular points covered by the exhibitors.[2]

The evidence indicates nothing unusual about the public reactions to Coffin's and Williston's orations. With one exception, the chapter records for these two years applied the word "elegant" to every one of the Phi Beta Kappa exercises. In the Harvard minutes, entries for both the anniversaries contained the term "ingenious". In 1795, the secretary elaborated further on William Harris's offer-

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Recommended, in An Oration," Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH (hereafter DCL).

[2] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 17, 1794, HUA; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," January 6 and December 21, 1795, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT.

ing by referring to it as "instructive and pleasing." A Boston newspaper reporting on this event injected two new concepts into the repertoire of praise when it appended "sentimental and patriot[ic]" to the standard "elegant." Commenting on Williston's speech a few months later, the Courier of New Hampshire declared that his presentation "did honour to humanity."[3]

Phi Beta Kappa festivities during this time manifested a greater concern for public recognition of the association's importance. Early in 1794, the person designated to speak at the next Dartmouth exhibition urged the chapter to appoint someone to perform in case he could not. His eagerness to enhance the organization's reputation motivated this advice: "The existence of the society is no way so particularly known to the world, as by its anniversaries." The records characterized the assembly that turned out for the substitute as "respectable and splendid."[4]

Every description of the celebrations emphasized the number and prominence of the spectators. In a letter attached to the manuscript of his oration, Williston evaluated the gathering at Dartmouth in 1795: "Beside the members of the society & of the university, there were several respectable characters, from different parts of the country, present in the chapel, when this piece was spoken." The chapter secretary deemed the listeners "numerous and polite." The Yale archives mentioned that the members convened for the December 1794 meeting "attended by the Honorable Judges of the Superior Court and a large number of other respectable Gentlemen." An entry for the next winter abbreviated this designation to "a large number of gentlemen." At Harvard the minutes registered "a large respectable audience" in 1794 and added the word "attentive" a year later. In a rather backhanded manner, a newspaper account complimented the composition of the crowd at Cambridge in 1795: "A larger number of brothers was assembled on this occasion, than have attended the celebration for many years." Although this article implied that the Phi Beta Kappa had not been receiving the appropriate patronage from its own constituency, it clearly indicated the significance of community support for the institution's public image.[5]

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[3] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," January 6 and December 21, 1795; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 17, 1794, July 16, 1795; Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 26, 1794, August 26, 1795, DCL; Federal Orrery, July 20, 1795; Courier of New Hampshire, September 5, 1795.

[4] Aaron Kinsman to Asa McFarland, January 4, 1794, DCL; Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 26, 1794.

Despite this heed for the club's stature, the biographical data of the speakers from this period do not suggest anything extraordinary about them. The oldest of the seven performers was thirty. Two were twenty-nine, and the rest were between twenty-one and twenty-five years old. Their birthdates covered essentially the same span as those of the previous group, with the earliest in 1765 and the latest in 1773. Again, two graduated from college before the ratification of the federal Constitution. All but one, a doctor, studied either law or divinity. Except for Josiah Quincy, who inherited a comfortable maintenance at an early age, each one kept school at some point. For half of them, teaching provided an income while they prepared for their preferred professions. But for the other three, instilling knowledge in students at an academy or college seemed to form part of their ultimate career plans. Overall, the experiences of these seven individuals conformed to the pattern set by the eleven who spoke between 1791 and 1793.[6]

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[5] [Seth Williston] to [Cornelius] Davis, n.d., DCL; Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 26, 1795; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," January 6 and December 21, 1795; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 17, 1794, July 16, 1795; Federal Orrery, July 20, 1795.

II

Charles Coffin, the orator at Harvard in 1794, came from a background that reflected the escalating discord over American development in the late eighteenth century. Although his irony obscured the grounds on which he opposed the code of honor, his discourse revealed how controversy on this issue corresponded to disputes about social and economic transformations. In the United States, antiduelling sentiments had even more relevance twelve years later, when Coffin's address appeared in the Literary Miscellany, a publication sponsored by the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa.

Born in Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1765, Coffin belonged to a respected family. In order to mitigate the conflicts intensifying in the period of the French and Indian Wars, the Coffins took advantage of opportunities available in commerce, through education, and on the northern frontier Both his parents were directly descended from original settlers of the town. Relatives of his mother operated a tannery. Charles's paternal grandfather and great-grandfather had monopolized the office of town clerk since 1711. His father, Joshua Coffin, the eldest son, fell heir to considerable prestige and property. He attained the rank of major in the militia and shared with his parents the two-family house that he would eventually own. The Coffin assets provided independent livelihoods for Joshua's brothers and sisters. Two of Charles's uncles entered the professions when they finished Harvard, one in medicine and the other in divinity. The latter took a parish in the present state of Maine, where a sister had gone after marrying a minister. A third brother became a ship captain. The members of this generation clearly had access to substantial resources.[7]

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[6] See appendix for biographical data.

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[7] John J. Currier, History of Newbury (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1902), p. 669, and "Ould Newbury": Historical and Biographical Sketches (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1896), p. 171; John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, 17 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873-1975), 14:402-9; Sylvanus J. Macy, Genealogy of the Early Generations of the Coffin Family in New England (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1870), p. 14; Levi Bartlett, Geneological and Biographical Sketches of the Bartlett Family in England and America (Lawrence, MA: Geo. S. Merrill & Crocker, 1876), pp. 42, 60-61; George T. Little, The Descendents of George Little (Lewiston, ME: Journal Office, 1882), pp. 32-33; Cyrus Woodman,

Even with these advantages, however, the Coffins could not avert all clashes over the distribution of family property. Because Joshua's siblings had to leave the homestead, they enjoyed an autonomy impossible under the patriarch's roof. At the age of thirty-three, the year before the birth of Charles, his eighth child, the head of this growing household expressed his frustration over his continued dependency in a letter to his father:

> 'Tis in your power to make my life (as to outward circumstances) either Happy or Miserable....I don't ask you to give me house or land at present, although I d'ont [sic] think in that case I should be unreasonable (considering my family Increases so fast), but at present I only ask leave to build a Bed chimney on my own cost for our present comfort.

Committing this request to writing testified to the enormous amount of tension in their relationship.[8]

In addition to this intergenerational strife, Charles's family became embroiled in various quarrels that arose from changing conditions in the second half of the eighteenth century. Early in 1764, during his grandfather's tenure as town clerk, the Massachusetts legislature allowed the inhabitants of Newbury residing along the Merrimack River, "mostly Merchants, Traders, and Artificers," to separate from the remainder, "chiefly Husbandmen," and to incorporate as Newburyport. Two years later, the Coffins partic-

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"Memoir of Paul Coffin, D.D.," Collections of the Maine Historical Society 4(1856):249; W. S. Appleton, Gatherings Toward a Genealogy of the Coffin Family (Boston: Press of David Clapp, 1896), p. 20.

[8] Currier, "Ould Newbury", p. 171; Appleton, Coffin Family, p. 19.

ipated in an effort to avoid paying the salary of a minister who disagreed with many Calvinist doctrines. His opponents asked the parish for a release from their legal obligation so they could establish their own church:

> We therefore your petitioners...humbly pray that you would...grant us the relief we might rationally expect in a nation where liberty of conscience is indulged to every sect and denomination of christians whatever, and in a land where a love of, and an ardent desire after, liberty is born with us, and prevails against all opposition even in civil, much more in religious, affairs.

On similar grounds, the town joined in the colonial protests against the new taxes imposed by the British government. Charles's father served on several committees responsible for the nonimportation agreements and other measures that led up to American independence.[9]

If Joshua Coffin had lived to carry on these activities during the war, he might have improved his family's situation significantly. In 1774, however, he died, less than seven months after his own father's death and before Charles reached his ninth birthday. The allocation of the estate followed the pattern of the previous generation, without the problems presented by a paternal authority figure. The two oldest brothers took over the halves of the ancestral home. They owned a tannery and engaged in trade. Charles and his youngest brother, who became a minister, went to Harvard.[10]

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[9] Currier, History of Newbury, pp. 266-67, 343, 581-82; Joshua Coffin, A Sketch of the History of Newbury, Newburyport, and West Newbury, from 1635 to 1845 (Boston: Samuel G. Drake, 1845), pp. 232-33, 236-37; Sibley and Shipton, Graduates of Harvard, 11:82-83.

Charles Coffin graduated from college in 1785, having encountered essentially the same curriculum that encouraged John Q. Adams to depend on scientific knowledge to deal with an expanding market economy. At his commencement he discussed a question typical of Enlightenment political theory: "Whether any one particular form of government would be best for every civilized nation?" Although Coffin did not obtain the most notable assignments at exhibitions, he never incurred any fines for infractions of discipline, according to the Harvard records.[11]

After Coffin left college, he studied medicine in Newburyport with one of his uncles. While receiving practical training from an experienced physician, he could have attended lectures by the medical faculty recently instituted at Harvard. In 1788, Adams mentioned passing a pleasant evening with him in Newbury: "We spent our time in sociable chat, and in singing...good, jovial, expressive songs such as we sung at College." Despite steps to professionalize medical education, physicians did not need either a degree or a license to charge for their services. Indeed, all the learning available at the time could do little more to alleviate pain and sickness than the accumulated wisdom of folk healers. As a doctor, Coffin had to confront a discrepancy between the actual accomplishments of eighteenth century science and the ideal of a rational universe promulgated at Harvard.[12]

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[10] Currier, *"Ould Newbury"*, pp. 171-72; Appleton, *Coffin Family*, pp. 19, 33-34.

[11] Harvard College, Faculty Records 5:92, 107, 111, 146, 158, 172, 197, HUA.

The winter before Coffin delivered his Phi Beta Kappa oration the town of Newburyport hired him to supervise its inoculating hospital during a smallpox epidemic. Such outbreaks occurred periodically in America throughout the eighteenth century. They generally began when infected individuals arrived, usually by ship, in a community containing a large number of inhabitants who had no previous exposure to the disease. At the time neither a cure nor a vaccine existed. In the process Coffin oversaw, healthy persons deliberately contracted the virus. Since they did not feel particularly unwell when their cases first became active, they could spread the contagion as easily as natural victims. Places like Newburyport, especially susceptible to illnesses brought by trading vessels from foreign lands, enacted stringent laws to isolate both newly-landed and voluntary sufferers. Those who had chosen to undergo inoculation frequently objected to their confinement in the same hospitals that accommodated sailors and recent immigrants. Because of the potential for violations of the restrictions, the town instructed Coffin to employ guards "to keep off intruders and to see that the patients conduct[ed] themselves agreeably to the rules and regulations prescribed." As long as quarantine provided the only effective check on epidemics, legislation limiting personal and commercial movement did not constitute an irrational antimodern reaction. Rather, it represented an attempt to make impersonal institutions offset an unwelcome effect of increasing cosmopolitanism in the United States.[13]

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[12] S.B. Sparhawk to N. Cleaveland, December 7 and 27, 1856, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME; Josiah Quincy, The History of Harvard University, 2 vols. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee, & Co., 1860), 2:266-67; David G. Allen, Robert J. Taylor, Marc Friedlaender, and Celeste Walker, eds., Diary of John Quincy Adams, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2:338; Philip Cash, Eric Christianson, and J. Worth Estes, eds., Medicine in Colonial Massachusetts, 1620-1820, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. 57 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1980); Joseph F. Kett, The Formation of the American Medical Profession: The Role of Institutions, 1780-1860 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 14-15; John Duffy, Epidemics in Colonial America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), chap. 1.

Eventually Coffin abandoned health care, perhaps because it did not sufficiently accord with Enlightenment principles. Long after his death, his daughter reported, "I have heard my mother say that he gave up the practice of medicine on account of the anxiety and trial of feeling it caused him." At some point before his marriage in 1801, she recollected, Coffin moved to Brunswick, Maine, where he "engaged in mercantile business." He proved "unsuccessful" at trade, his daughter added, because "he was not fitted for it, by taste or education." Although not directly responsible for the lives of other people, merchants faced the formidable task of calculating the risks engendered by economic development. Finally Coffin devoted himself to teaching. Through education at least he could compensate for human weakness by helping to diffuse the scientific criteria that ought to govern not only the physical world but also the conduct of the rational beings in it.[14]

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[13] Currier, History of Newbury, pp. 291-93, and History of Newburyport, 2 vols. (Newburyport: Newcomb & Gauss, Printers, 1906-9), 1:72-76; Joshua Coffin, Sketch of Newbury, p. 266; Duffy, Epidemics, chap. 2.

The literary style of Coffin's Phi Beta Kappa oration made his meaning unclear in many places. Nevertheless, at several points his false praise suggested a connection between duelling and the changes he was experiencing in late eighteenth century America. Significantly, Coffin treated the practice as an innovation. Adopting the rhetoric of social improvement, he pretended to lament the hindrances to its advancement.

> At present, alas! the beauteous effects of this noble system are but imperfectly and partially realized. Like every science of human cultivation, its steps are but slowly progressive. Old customs and opinions, antiquated superstitions, and blind prejudices form an obstinate mound against its glorious influence.

Coffin was addressing the fact that the code of honor had little impact in the colonies before the War for Independence, although it supposedly embodied a legacy from a bygone era. Duelling spread in the United States as international commercial arrangements replaced provincial structures. Unlike the contagion of smallpox, however, the custom furnished its adherents with a strategy both for protesting against the demise of more personal power relationships and for controlling violence in the period before emerging institutions attained hegemony.[15]

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[14] Sparhawk to Cleaveland, December 27, 1856.

The duel's proponents emphasized the capacity of formalized ritual to curtail some of the most destructive consequences of hostilities between individuals. In a classic encounter, the principals shot at each other with smooth bore pistols from a specified distance, usually ten paces. The procedure entailed written challenges and acceptances. Seconds negotiated carefully worded conditions after exhausting all their resources for manufacturing a reconciliation.[16]

On a larger scale, duelling theoretically could diminish the strife in society at large. The notion of honor underpinning it relied on class distinctions that imitated aristocratic hierarchies. The code romanticized the stable social order of an age of chivalry that never actually existed, either in America or anywhere else. Observance of the punctilios of honor designated those who deserved recognition as gentlemen, as did the worship of another pseudo deity Coffin mentioned - "that most capricious, ever varying goddess, fashion." Devotees of such outward manifestations of rank argued that they decreased unsettling contests by maintaining strict standards of politeness.[17]

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[15] Charles Coffin, "Essay on Duelling," p. 368; Evarts B. Greene, "The Code of Honor in Colonial and Revolutionary Times, With Special Reference to New England," Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts 26(1924-6):367-88; William O. Stevens, Pistols at Ten Paces: The Story of the Code of Honor in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1940), chap. 2; Edwin H. Cady, The Gentleman in America (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1949), p. 58; Dickson B. Bruce, Jr., Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 42.

[16] Stevens, Pistols at Ten Paces, chap. 8; Bruce, Violence and Culture, pp. 24-25, 32-39.

A duel occurred when an insult brought a person's status into question. Only white males engaged in regular encounters, ideally with their equals. They could refuse to fight their inferiors, inflicting a demeaning punishment for impudence instead. Certain offenses, such as blows, charges of deceit, and unflattering remarks, could lower a man's standing in the eyes of a world that abided by the code of honor. A challenge counteracted the harm inherent in an affront by demonstrating that death meant less than the loss of stature. A passage that appeared in the manuscript but not in the printed version of Coffin's oration referred to this aspect of the duellist's etiquette: "Say but a crooked word; cast but a glance of disrespect; clothed in vengenance he hurls swift death on the audacious wretch, who presumed to depress his importance." For duelling to flourish, public opinion had to penalize a so-called coward more severely than a gentleman who took his antagonist's life.[18]

Exact statistics can never demonstrate the pervasiveness of the custom in any particular time or place in America. Technically a crime, though seldom prosecuted, an encounter took place with minimal publicity and with as little official notice as possible. Furthermore, the thin line between a proper duel and a more informal confrontation contributed to the difficulties in compiling figures. Publicized incidents and personal accounts, however, indicated a rather distinct pattern. Participants in duels most frequently moved in a social context where force remained very close to the surface or where no other available mechanism proved adequate for determining truth, justice, or privilege. They included army and navy officers, Southerners, Westerners, newspaper editors, politicians, and young men anxious to establish their worth.[19]

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[17] Charles Coffin, "Essay on Duelling," p. 366; Bruce, Violence and Culture, pp. 28-29, 40-42; John Fraser, America and the Patterns of Chivalry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 36-40; George A. Kelly, "Duelling in Eighteenth-Century France: Archaeology, Rationale, Implications," Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation 21 (1980):236-54.

[18] Charles Coffin, "Anniversary Oration," p. 64; Bruce, Violence and Culture, pp. 24, 28-31, 38-40; Stevens, Pistols at Ten Paces, chap. 6; Richard Buel, Jr., Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics, 1789-1815 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 80-81.

Coffin ridiculed the military dimension of the code of honor, first by introducing his topic with an allusion to the fame of Caesar and Alexander and later by comparing the duellist's momentary remorse with that of a patriotic hero. His text described the pain "which for a moment Hector felt, when embracing Andromache and his child, before he left them to join the army." With this sentimental scene, Coffin showed that he did not condone Hector's abandonment of his family attachments "when his country's call touched his recollection" and "the quick impulses of martial glory swelled high his throbbing bosom."[20]

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[19] Bruce, Violence and Culture, pp. 4-5, 27, 39-42; Stevens, Pistols at Ten Paces, passim; Ben C. Truman, The Field of Honor: Being a Complete and Comprehensive History of Duelling in All Countries (New York: Fords, Howard, & Hurlbert, 1884), chaps. 14-22; Lorenzo Sabine, Notes on Duels and Duelling, 3rd ed. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co., 1859); J. Winston Coleman, Jr., Famous Kentucky Duels: The Story of the Code of Honor in the Bluegrass State (Frankfort, KY: Roberts Printing Co., 1953).

In his discourse, Coffin opposed duelling on both traditional and enlightened grounds. Speaking ironically, he dismissed the objection "that true dignity and genuine honor demand the forgiveness of injuries, and pity for the injurious person" as "the musty doctrine of timid, superstitious souls, who are too lame to assert their rights, and shelter their cowardice under the authority of a pretended revelation from heaven." To balance this invocation of religion, Coffin next appealed to the universally valid secular guide, "that reason, which the duellist himself possesses." He condemned not only the killing that resulted from challenges but also the idea of honor itself. Likening it to "the subtle gas of fermentation," Coffin claimed that such a "sublime" concept defied definition; therefore, he only gave its genealogy: "Pride and shame are her noble parents; revenge her darling offspring."[21]

By talking about duelling as a new phenomenon, Coffin was looking nostalgically at a social organization in which his family had consistently enjoyed positions of leadership. Foes of the practice could not eradicate it by returning to the past any more than eighteenth century Americans could realistically deal with the threat of smallpox by isolating themselves from foreign contamination. The code of honor eventually lost its influence in America because the elite accepted institutions that ruled out personal combat as a means of resolving disputes over status. Just as Coffin helped to enforce the laws that reduced the perils of epidemics, so he promoted the campaign against duelling through an address to one of the voluntary associations in the developing network of structures for ascribing merit.[22]

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[20] Charles Coffin, "Essay on Duelling," p. 367; Stevens, Pistols at Ten Paces, chap. 4.

[21] Charles Coffin, "Essay on Duelling," pp. 364-66; Donna T. Andrew, "The Code of Honour and Its Critics: The Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850," Social History 5(1980):409-23.

Inoculating hospitals did not wipe out smallpox in America, however. Similarly, the triumph of impersonal instruments for deciding quarrels over rank did not solve the problems confronting Coffin in the late eighteenth century. A reform that focused on the actions of a few individuals could not alleviate the fundamental conflicts caused by larger transformations. Instead, endeavors to alter the behavior of particular categories of Americans often increased the enmity between various groups.

III

When Seth Williston spoke at Dartmouth in 1795, he delivered a Phi Beta Kappa address with extremely controversial implications. Although the measures he recommended to end "Bestial Slavery" did not require any drastic changes in human conduct, he based his arguments on rather radical assumptions about natural rights. In his attempt to persuade his audience, Williston combined Enlightenment ideas with doctrines of innate depravity and disinterested benevolence.[23]

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[22] Bruce, Violence and Culture, p. 41; Andrew, "Code of Honour," pp. 423-34.

In 1770, Williston was born in Suffield, Connecticut, near the Massachusetts boundary. Relatives of his mother belonged to two of the town's successful trading families who would gain political prominence in the Jefferson administration. One of his father's brothers, a minister in West Haven, displayed a missionary zeal that might have inspired young Williston. In 1774, when Suffield joined the communities throughout the American colonies protesting the blockade of Boston, his father served on the committee for sending supplies and a year later accepted a commission as a lieutenant in the army. During his boyhood, Williston labored with his father, a farmer and saddler. In 1786 he began to prepare for college, studying with several educated individuals in the region, including a brother-in-law of Simeon Baldwin. The following year he entered Dartmouth.[24]

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[23] Williston, "Oration"; Courier of New Hampshire, September 5, 1795.

[24] Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36), 20:311-12; William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 9 vols. (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1857-69) 4:140-46; Robert H. Alcorn, The Biography of a Town: Suffield, Connecticut, 1670-1970 (Hartford: Connecticut Printers, 1970), chap. 4; Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 6 vols. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1885-1912), 2:502-4; James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, 4 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 4:578; John Q. Adams, ed., "The Diaries of the Rev.

Many residents of the area in which Williston grew up seemed especially eager to take advantage of the opportunities offered by national expansion. A large number responded to population pressures by migrating to the northern and western frontiers. A few sought to enhance their standing locally through land speculation in remote regions. Others invested in manufactures and in commercial ventures on the Connecticut River. The extent to which Suffield's inhabitants engaged in such enterprises gave their attitude toward the federal government a certain significance. In 1788 both of the town's representatives voted against the United States Constitution at the state ratifying convention.[25]

Suffield's orientation toward the hinterlands might provide the best clue in explaining why Williston went to Dartmouth. The town had ties with New Haven that he could have put to use if he had gone to Yale. Several of its leading citizens had graduated from there. His decision to attend Dartmouth may have hinged on financial considerations or on a distrust of Ezra Stiles's cosmopolitan approach to higher education. Whatever factor sent Williston to the New Hampshire college, the atmosphere there undoubtedly reinforced the example set by the people of Suffield who tried

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Seth Williston, D.D.," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 8(1915-6):127; F. B. Heitman, Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution, April, 1775, to December, 1783 (Washington, DC: n.p., 1893), p. 439.

[25] Alcorn, Biography of a Town, chaps. 3-4.

to ease social friction by settling new territories.[26]

Eleazar Wheelock founded Dartmouth in 1770 in order to train teachers and ministers who would devote themselves to Indian missions and to New Englanders relocated in the wilderness. Even when motivated by a sincere concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of the aborigines, efforts to convert them to evangelical Protestantism almost always became mingled with plans to turn their hunting grounds into productive farms. Competition with Catholics from Canada for the natives' souls usually translated into the issue of whose empire would control a tribe's domain. Dartmouth faced particular temptations because its endowment encompassed huge tracts of land, the value of which depended on their suitability for settlement. Gradually, the college's purpose shifted from the salvation of savages to the preservation of civilization among the British Americans displacing them.[27]

When Williston matriculated, Dartmouth's special character still set it apart from Harvard and Yale, but an increasing proportion of the undergraduates evinced little interest in the missionary field. The curriculum resembled that of the two older institutions, incorporating both traditional requirements in the classics and relatively modern innovations in Enlightenment science. Like students elsewhere, Williston's class recited from textbooks, performed literary exercises, and heard lectures. In 1785, a long-awaited shipment had arrived from England with equipment for illustrating the operation of the universe and the laws of nature. Appropriately, most of the trigonometry problems assigned at Dartmouth in the late eighteenth century involved calculating the location and dimensions of land and the placement of buildings on it. At his commencement in 1791, Williston delivered a Greek oration.[28]

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[26] Alcorn, Biography of a Town, chaps. 3-4; Leon B. Richardson, History of Dartmouth College (Hanover: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), pp. 239-40.

[27] Frederick Chase, A History of Dartmouth College and the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1891), pp. 88-89, 305-17, 528-29, 632-33; Richardson, History of Dartmouth, chaps. 3-6; James P. Rhonda and James Axtell, Indian Missions: A Critical Bibliography (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 1-7, 29-47; Robert J. Berkhofer, Jr., Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), chaps. 1-5.

During Williston's undergraduate years, the college had one professor in the learned languages and another in mathematics and philosophy. After the death of Eleazer Wheelock in 1779, the presidency went to his son John, who also served as professor of history and metaphysics. A tutor completed the teaching staff. Each faculty member took charge of a class, with the seniors reserved to the president. The winter before Williston entered Dartmouth, the divinity professor died. Because John Wheelock never received ordination, the responsibility for religious exercises fell to the classicist, who had shared in the care of the college church.[29]

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[28] Richardson, History of Dartmouth, chaps. 4-6; George T. Chapman, Sketches of the Alumni of Dartmouth College (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1867), pp. 13-63; Chase, History of Dartmouth College, p. 573; Sanborn C. Brown and Leonard M. Rieser, Natural Philosophy at Dartmouth: From Surveyors' Chains to the Pressure of Light (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1974), chaps. 1-2; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 4:140.

Williston did not make a profession of faith while at Dartmouth. According to one of his classmates, he demanded greater assurance about his spiritual state than most people. He could not have obtained much assistance in amplifying his Hopkinsian views from the college pastor, who had an aversion to that creed. In retrospect, Williston admitted that his conversion probably occurred before the end of his freshman year. At that point, he started to relish the notion that his salvation would not result from his own exertions but from the grace of God. He recalled an incident from his journey home for summer vacation that reflected the connection in his oration between nature and the divine: "I was riding alone in the woods between Hatfield & Northampton, my mind seemed to be swallowed up in God. I could see God in every object around me - the birds & the trees & everything seemed to praise God." In 1796, Williston confessed that he sometimes still doubted the genuineness of this early awakening and of later comforting symptoms: "I built more hopes of my being in a justified state upon my experiences since I left College than upon what took place while I was there. But even to this hour I am at a loss on which side I stand."[30]

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[29] Richardson, History of Dartmouth, pp. 195-99, 203, 252-56; Chase, History of Dartmouth College, pp. 564, 629; John K. Lord, A History of Dartmouth College, 1815-1909 (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1913), pp. 1-8.

After Williston graduated from Dartmouth, he taught school for almost three years, first at Windsor and then at New London, Connecticut. While he was living in the latter place, he underwent a spiritual renewal which apparently convinced him of his calling to the ministry. Perhaps the death of his father in this period hastened his decision. Whatever impact the bustling port's commercial environment might have had on Williston's religious condition, it may well have convinced him that he preferred less densely populated surroundings.[31]

During the summer of 1794, Williston studied theology with Charles Backus in Somers, Connecticut. Licensed to preach that autumn, he supplied several churches in the western part of the state. A month before he addressed the Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa in 1795, Williston began to divide his time between congregations in two growing Vermont towns, Dorset and Rupert. Many of their most substantial families came from Connecticut, with some originally from Suffield. Rupert invited Williston to settle as its minister, but he chose instead to visit an area in central New York with no gathered churches.[32]

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[30] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 4:144; Chase, History of Dartmouth College, p. 631; Adams, "Diaries of Seth Williston," 7:237-39.

[31] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20:311; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 4:140; Adams, "Diaries of Seth Williston," 7:253; Frances M. Caulkins, History of New London, Connecticut (New London: H. D. Utley, 1895), chap. 33, pp. 622-23.

From the day of his departure for the hinterlands in 1796, Williston kept diaries subsequently published in an edited form. About a year after he spoke to the Phi Beta Kappa, he "began to review & correct" his oration, "with an idea of inserting it in the Theological Magazine." Williston did not specify the extent or content of his revisions, but in a footnote to the surviving draft, he remarked that the religious forum allowed him to include a comment about the performance of moral duties and a "renovated heart":

> If I may not as a stage-orator, yet as a writer for the Theological Magazine, I may plainly tell you, that while you are in the flesh, that is, while you are in a natural, unrenewed state, however specious & attractive your external behaviour may be, you cannot please GOD.

The Dartmouth College Library now has this transcribed copy, along with his cover letter to "Mr. Davis, editor of Theological Magazine." Williston mentioned that he "had no design of its ever seeing a printing office" until "a worthy clergyman," one of the periodical's "principal correspondents," solicited it. Although the journal published other articles he submitted, this composition never appeared there.[33]

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[32] Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20:311; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 4:140-41; Lewis C. Aldrich, ed., History of Bennington, County, VT (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1889), chaps. 23, 27; Zephine Humphrey, The Story of Dorset (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Co., 1924), chaps. 6, 14-15; Naomi S. Guibord, A Glimpse of the Early History of Rupert, Vermont (n.p., n.d.), pp. 8-9, 14.

[33] Adams, "Diaries of Seth Williston," 7:175, 179-80, 194, 202, 207; Williston, "Oration," p. 18; [Williston] to Davis, n.d.

In his diaries Williston described some of his encounters with animals that illuminated the sentiments he expressed in his discourse. Considering his topic, he had surprisingly little prior contact with wildlife. When Williston observed two deer soon after his arrival in New York, he noted that he had never before seen a live specimen. Because of the crowded conditions in frontier dwellings, Williston often went outdoors to find solitude. On one occasion, he discovered he had unexpected company:

> At even I was in the woods alone, when a bear came within a few feet of me. He then retreated two rods & stopped, but when I moved he fled. I never saw a bear wild before, he looks something formidable. But I was safe under divine protection.

Williston typically tried to sanctify such adventures. Kept awake by pests in his lodgings one night, he gave the "gloomy meditations" that perplexed his sleepless mind a providential meaning: "Little insects, if commissioned by God, can take away all our comfort." The next week, however, he took a more practical approach when "disturbed by creatures much smaller than" himself: "This night slept upon the floor to avoid those creatures with whom I got acquainted last night." An entry over a year later suggested another secular context for his experiences with the beasts of the forest: "This morning I ate a breakfast of bear's meat. It was exceedingly good. Now I believe that every creature of God is good." Frequently afflicted with digestive disorders, Williston deemed overeating his greatest vice.[34]

The Hopkinsian theology that underpinned Williston's career and emerged in his diary also furnished a framework for his plea for "Humanity to Animals." In his Phi Beta Kappa oration, he emphasized the universe's dependence on its maker: "The supreme Architect has built a spacious fabrick, which he calls creation....The whole is subordinated to the glory of the builder." To this premise Williston added a fairly traditional statement about the hierarchy God ordained among the species:

> Being a lover of order, he has established numerous grades of existences, differing so imperceptibly from their neighbors on either hand, that there is little room left for envy, or contempt. And all together form an harmonious system; in which one part has no right to say to the other, I have no need of thee.

Furthermore, the orator contended, the degree of life an entity enjoyed determined its ultimate worth: "The supreme Being regards his whole family, estimating every particular part according to its quantity of existence, & its usefulness in the great system." Williston claimed that he only wanted humans to do likewise: "I ask, that the animals below us may be treated agreeably to the dignity of their rank in creation."[35]

By insisting that people recognize the inequalities decreed by God, Williston actually was asserting an extreme interpretation of divine sovereignty. In his view, individuals sinned when they considered the value an animal might have to them personally instead of the position assigned it by the master of all.

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[34] Adams, "Diaries of Seth Williston," 7:185, 188-90, 192, 8:227-28.

[35] Ibid., "Diaries of Seth Williston," 7:194; Williston, "Oration," pp. 2-4; Joseph A. Conforti, Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1981).

> An opinion prevails, that the whole of that part of creation below man is designed solely to subserve him, & gratify his appetites; that the Creator, in forming these existences, had no regard to their own happiness, only as subordinated to man's more important interests. This idea is equally fraught with pride & falsehood.

Williston declared it "great arrogance for any one part of creation to suppose itself to be the only object of the Creator's love." He deprecated the "rank pride & haughtiness of soul" that induced "man to say, that this lower world was built solely to accommodate him." In other words, by exaggerating their "own superior importance among the creatures," humans were usurping a majesty that rightfully belonged to God.[36]

By accentuating the humbleness of the human situation in the divine plan, Williston posited a greater equality among created beings than people generally acknowledged. He drew a very clear parallel to the distinctions erected among humans:

> To say, that an equal quantity of felicity in a fly is not as valuable as it is in me, is to introduce the doctrine of nobility: it is to suppose myself brought into existence, possessed of more dignity & worth than my fellow citizens of the same natural endowments. And the doctrine of nobility, or privileged orders is deservedly odious to those, who are all the children of one common parent.

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[36] Williston, "Oration," pp. 3-4, 10.

Williston did not explain how to ascertain "sums of enjoyment" in other species, but he maintained that identical amounts of happiness had an "equal value, wherever they are found."[37]

In fact, Williston did not demand such profound changes in human behavior toward members of "the bestial race" as his formula for judging an action implied. "It is not my design to take the horse from under his rider, nor to snatch the sheep from the shepherd's fold." Citing revelation, he even defended his capacious appetite from assaults by vegetarians: "It is conceded, that the word of GOD authorizes us to feed upon slain beasts."[38]

Williston exhibited far more dismay over practices that testified to artificial differences among humans. He contrasted a slaughter prompted by need with a wasteful self-indulgence in which "hecatombs of beasts are sacrificed upon the altar of luxury."

> To hunt wild beasts & fowls, & to captivate the subjects of watry Neptune, for the sake of procuring a support for nature, may be innocent; but when this is done only as an amusement, it is unpardonable. To kill those harmless creatures, as many do, without any design of using them for food, is a species of murder.

Williston argued that a person, unlike other predators, might let an urge for power motivate an unkind or evil deed: "A beast of prey kills not, but when instigated by hunger; but man, more savage than the tyger; often kills to gratify his lust of domination; to show his lordship, by making others miserable." From his perspective, an individual who denied the affinity among earthly beings came to "resemble an hereditary lord, who scorns to mingle with, or even look upon any but the great."[39]

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[37] Ibid., p. 9.

[38] Ibid., pp. 2, 8.

Williston criticized hunting and fishing as aristocratic customs, directing his greatest ire at England. He portrayed "the great, who...affect to be much softened by the manners of courts," in a scene of merciless pursuit.

> What a picture does this give of human nature - to see the noble peers of the realm, who wallow in luxury, all in full chase after a poor, innocent, affrighted hare, which they value no more than a straw, except it be for the pleasure which they derive from its pain!

He then disparaged Britain's game laws, ridiculing "one of the most learned & polite kingdoms in the world" because it would "sacredly preserve the sole right, of exercising this delightful cruelty, to its king & chief estates." Williston did not cast blame only on the wealthy: "The torturing of animals has afforded the highest entertainment to all classes of people, in different ages of the world." All his examples, however, focussed on traditionally stratified societies. Williston denounced contests between "wild beasts" at Roman circuses, Spanish bullbaiting, and cockfights in the southern United States.[40]

He ultimately connected the abuse of animals to a desire to acquire an unwarranted ascendancy over other people. Anyone who would "sport with the misery of" a living being, Williston avered, "is but illy calculated to make a good member of human society. He would in the same manner trifle with the lives of his fellow men, were he not restrained by fear." Unless individuals accepted the principles he was advocating, the inherent corruption of original sin would impel them to subjugate everyone they could. "Man is, by nature, a tyrant....This despotic temper, natural to man, has led him to extend his domination as far as the hand of power has been able to conduct him."[41]

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[39] Ibid., pp. 5-6, 8.

[40] Ibid., pp. 6-7, 14-15.

Williston recognized that his theory of equality prohibited slavery. "One man has bound another as good as himself, and driven him about wherever he pleased, calling the unhappy victim his slave." He even disapproved of men oppressing "the daughters of Eve." Williston carried his premises to their logical conclusions and applied them rigorously. He concentrated on reason's uniformity, placing matters of morality and religion within its purview: "Would you be consistently benevolent? - be universally so."[42]

Unfortunately, by overestimating the progress made by humans, Williston weakened his appeal for justice for all sentient organisms. He alluded to recent advances obtained through polical revolutions.

> After a lethargy of almost threescore centuries, the spirits of men begin to be roused to vindicate their rights, & clear themselves from the shackles of tyranny.

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[41] Ibid., pp. 1, 8.

[42] Ibid., pp. 1, 17-18.

> Many champions have stepped forth into the field to assert the equality of men, & to maintain their unalienable privileges.

Williston presented an unrealistic assessment of the improvement in the condition of slaves during the previous fifty years: "The vail [sic] of prejudice is rent asunder. And now, those, who will, cannot help but see the iniquity of slavery." Victims of sexual discrimination, he decided, no longer required his aid: "The rights of women begin to be vindicated. Many of the sex have mental strength sufficient to plead their own cause." Williston justified speaking on behalf of the beasts because unlike downtrodden humans, "they cannot open their mouths in their own cause."[43]

In comparison with the wrongs suffered by the majority of the human race, the treatment he beseeched for animals reeked of excessive sentimentality. According to Williston, humans had to reconcile themselves to their role in God's scheme. "It will not give the benevolent husbandman so much pain, to have his corn & fruits eaten by worms & insects, as to have them destroyed by fire or storm." Pests, Williston reminded his audience, "are capable of a considerable degree of enjoyment. When our fruits are destroyed by these, there is a less diminution of happiness in the system, than when they are destroyed by the elements." He reached his melodramatic peak in depicting the insensitivity of children: "How shocked is humanity at the sight of a cluster of school boys, who are trying their dexterity, by throwing stones at some chained little captives, which they have just plundered from the nest of their distressed mother!"[44]

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[43] Ibid., pp. 1-2, 19.

Because he wanted people to abstain from cruelty even if they failed to attain the religious attitude he found proper, Williston stressed the efficacy of early education: "The docile mind of the child will receive more impressions of humanity in a week, than can be taught the man in a year." Perhaps his assumption that knowledge could not produce the genuine beneficence occasioned by spiritual regeneration evoked his praise for puerile literature.

> The story of Louisa, in the Child's Friend, is better calculated to subserve the most important interests of mankind, than all the folios that have been written by natural philosophers....Such books as the Child's Friend, & The Task are not altogether unworthy your attention, who wear the robe of manhood.

Williston left no room for excuses from adults, proclaiming that they could still "commence students in the school of humanity."[45]

Williston denied that he was overly optimistic about the plight of humans:

> After all that has been pleaded in favour of a more kind & lenient treatment towards the inferior creation, I frankly avow, that I have no esteem of that distorted benevolence, which will drop a tear at the death of a Canary bird, while it rejoices in the death of a man, who is viewed as a rival or an enemy: that benevolence, which will weep at the least accident, that befals a favorite lap-dog, while it brandishes the lash of

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[44] Ibid., pp. 10-11; James Turner, Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain, and Humanity in the Victorian Mind (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[45] Williston, "Oration," p. 16.

> cruelty over a fellow human, who innocently bears the reproachful name of slave.

Nevertheless, his complacence about the labor remaining to achieve equal rights for rational beings detracted from his thesis.[46]

The two existing addresses from 1794 and 1795 confirm the fact that Phi Beta Kappa orators before Abraham Bishop discussed controversial topics. To marshall support for the reforms they espoused, Coffin and Williston used Enlightenment ideas in ways that reflected their personal experiences. With techniques of persuasion garnered from his polite learning, Coffin sought to make his environment conform more closely to his principles. Williston demonstrated some of the possible implications of natural rights theories reinforced by religious convictions. Neither, however, pushed the logical consistency of their views so far as to question the fundamental structures of the society in which they lived.

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[46] Ibid., p. 17.

CHAPTER SIX

"THE POISON OF THE SKEPTICAL AND DISORGANIZING PHILOSOPHY...," 1796-99

In comparison with the Phi Beta Kappa orators of the early 1790s, the speakers after 1795 tempered their calls for innovations. The addresses that survived indicate what Abraham Bishop's opponents expected to hear at Yale in 1800. While remarks directed to Phi Beta Kappa audiences in this period acknowledged the conflicts raging in the United States and throughout the world, they de-emphasized disagreements among educated Americans. By their efforts to eschew the more controversial consequences of their views, these college graduates fostered an appearance of unity among everyone with the proper sort of knowledge.[1]

Despite such attempts to minimize strife, serious divisions existed even between members of America's cultivated elite in the late eighteenth century. The authors of Phi Beta Kappa discourses could not eliminate all the incompatible implications of their arguments. The performers' personal situations gave them diverse perspectives on national development. The various components of their schooling, including Enlightenment philosophy, could not guarantee the consistency of the opinions expressed by different exhibitors. As before, the orators interpreted the ideas available to them in ways that helped them shape their circumstances.

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[1] Timothy Bigelow, An Oration, Pronounced at Cambridge, Before the PBK, at Their Annual Meeting on Thursday, July 21, 1796 (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1797); Charles Chauncey, An Oration, Delivered Before the Society of the PBK (New Haven: T. & S. Green, 1797); Ebenezer G. Marsh, An Oration, Delivered Before the PBK Society, at Their Anniversary Meeting, in New-Haven, on the Fifth of December, A.D. 1797 (Hartford, CT: Hudson & Goodwin, 1798); John T. Kirkland, An Oration, Delivered, at the Request of the Society of PBK, in the Chapel of Harvard College, on the Day of Their Anniversary, July 19, 1798 (Boston: John Russell, 1798).

I

From 1796 through 1799, the Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth chapters heard eleven anniversary addresses. According to the archives in Hanover, a "respectable" assembly heard Jesse Appleton, and "a numerous and polite" body turned out two years later. For four of the five exhibitions held in New Haven during this period, a secretary registered the spectators' prominence. At Charles Chauncey's 1796 talk, the minutes observed "a large collection of the respectable inhabitants of this city." When he declaimed again the next September, his listeners included not only an "unusual number of the society" but also "a very crowded & brilliant audience." In December, the members of the Phi Beta Kappa met "together with a number of respectable gentlemen who had been invited to attend" Ebenezer G. Marsh's discourse. The entry from the following winter even conveyed a certain gratitude to the outsiders at the meeting:

"A large number of respectable gentlemen from this & the neighbouring towns favoured us with their company."[2]

The treatments of the three Harvard celebrations from this era exemplified the greatest heed for public reaction thus far. In 1796 the records noted "a numerous, respectable, and attentive audience." A letter to the Phi Beta Kappa president at Yale put the situation in an even more flattering light: "Our last Anniversary was very splendid & attended by a very large collection of the Fraternity." Testifying to an admiring response from the gathering a year later, the chapter secretary declared that George Bradbury "received the bursts of applause from a full & very respectable auditory." A report from 1798 alluded to the interest shown by both members and nonmembers and to the prestige of the guests: "On our last Anniversary the number of brethren present composed a large assembly....A large number of ladies and gentlemen of the first character honored the occasion and heightened the general plaudit." This instance also marked the first explicit acknowledgement of women in the crowd since 1790.[3]

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[2] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 22, 1797, August 27, 1799, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH (hereafter DCL); Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 5, 1796, December 5, 1797, December 5, 1798, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "A Register of the Phi Beta Kappa," Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.

[3] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 21, 1796, July 20, 1797, HUA; Samuel Shapleigh to President of the PBK at New Haven, October 17, 1796, YUA; Samuel Shapleigh to Ebenezer G. Marsh, December 28, 1798, YUA.

Official descriptions of the exercises continued to employ the adjective "elegant" most frequently. In three places, commentators referred to orations as "ingenious." At Harvard an entry about Timothy Bigelow's 1796 presentation combined both these expressions with "spirited," and later added "excellent." A letter in the archives called it "very pertinent." Two statements emphasized the knowledge contained in the works more than the entertaining form in which it was communicated. The Yale minutes aptly adopted the word "learned" to praise Ebenezer G. Marsh's piece. In 1798 a more innovative observor appended "truly philosophic" to an account of the Dartmouth address. In an unusual phrase, a report on the ceremonies at Harvard that year switched the tone again. The corresponding secretary lauded John T. Kirkland's offering as "a sentimental banquet."[4]

Because one person spoke twice, ten different individuals delivered the speeches. Only one orator was born before 1770, and for the first time, some were not alive when the War for Independence began. Except for the oldest, who graduated in 1786, all received their undergraduate degrees between 1789 and 1796 from the colleges sponsoring their talks. Each was pursuing a career in either law or divinity, although two of the ten apparently deemed the ministry an adjunct to an academic calling.[5]

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[4] Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 21, 1798, August 27, 1799; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 21, 1796; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Register of the Phi Beta Kappa"; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 5, 1797, December 5, 1798, September 10, 1799; Samuel Shapleigh to William Woodward, September 9, 1796, DCL; Shapleigh to Marsh, December 28, 1798.

Of the eleven addresses, four remain - two from Harvard and two from Yale. None of the Dartmouth orations was preserved, nor did any notice of the festivities mention the subjects. In the sole Harvard discourse given during this span and not printed, George Bradbury discussed "the learned professions." Although the Yale speeches from both the commencement and December celebrations of 1797 were published, even the performers' manuscripts from the exhibitions in the other three years have disappeared. According to the society's records, Charles Chauncey considered "the refinement of the oriental nations," Henry Davis explored "the immortality of the soul," and George Tod analyzed "the causes of the low state of literature in the United States."[6]

II

After 1795 concern about the Phi Beta Kappa's public image prompted the various chapters to begin printing their anniversary orations. In 1796 the members at the Harvard meeting praised Timothy Bigelow's address and asked him "to give a copy for publication, as it contains an account of the principles of this institution and its beneficial effects." The corresponding secretary suggested that they wanted not merely to advance their organization's reputation among individuals already sympathetic with its efforts but also to counter hostility towards it. He asserted that Bigelow had described the Phi Beta Kappa "in such a manner that we think its enemies will have reason to admire it." The speaker sought to deflect criticism by emphasizing the society's contribution to philanthropy and progress. At the same time, he insisted that it discouraged radical transformations because of its adherence to strict standards of conduct and knowledge.[7]

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[5] See appendix for biographical data.

[6] Bigelow, Oration; Chauncey, Oration; Marsh, Oration; Kirkland, Oration; Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK Society," August 22, 1797, August 21, 1798, August 27, 1799; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 20, 1797; Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 5, 1796, December 5, 1798, September 10, 1799.

In 1767 Bigelow was born into a flourishing family in Worcester, Massachusetts. His father, the fourth and youngest son of a substantial farmer, had enhanced his situation while practicing the trade of a blacksmith. The holdings of his iron business grew with the aid of an appreciable fortune inherited by his wife. Still not members of the colonial elite despite their improving circumstances, the Bigelows tied the family's future to the cause of American independence. A leader in the agitation against British rule, the prosperous smith accepted a commission in the Continental army after the fighting started in eastern Massachusetts.[8]

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[7] Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of PBK," July 21, 1796; Bigelow, Oration; Shapleigh to Woodward, September 9, 1796.

[8] William Lincoln, History of Worcester, Massachusetts, From Its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836 (Worcester, MA: Moses D. Phillips & Co., 1837), pp. 277-81;

Although the controversies with England presented difficulties as well as opportunities, the Bigelows provided for the education of Timothy, the eldest son. Sometimes the hardships of the period gave him access to knowledge which he might not otherwise have acquired. When the British occupied Boston, the family made their home a refuge for Isaiah Thomas's printing operations. His public schooling disrupted, Timothy undertook a two-year stint at the press. In 1778, he left home in order to resume his studies, residing with a minister in a neighboring town. The following spring he joined his father in camp near the enemy forces in Rhode Island. When the regiment moved south, young Bigelow returned home to finish his preparations for college. Whatever his family's financial condition and political connections, he needed the cultivation available through an institution of higher learning to establish a firm claim to gentility.[9]

In 1782, Bigelow entered Harvard. Apparently he learned science and mathematics thoroughly but proved inadequate at housekeeping. When John Q. Adams moved into a dormitory suite vacated by Bigelow and his roommate, he called them "two of the greatest slovens in their Class." At commencement in 1786, Bigelow participated in a forensic, "whether religious disputation promotes the interests of

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National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 5:422.

[9] Lincoln, History of Worcester, p. 266; James S. Loring, The Hundred Boston Orators, 4th ed. (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1855), p. 301.

true Piety." According to Adams, he denied the question "extremely well." After graduation, Bigelow studied law in Worcester. In 1787 he demonstrated the extent to which he identified his own success with the prevailing postwar powers when he marched against the dissidents who were closing the Massachusetts courts.[10]

In fact, the Bigelows had not received an encouraging return from their investments on the new nation's behalf. Wartime inflation diminished military pay while it escalated household expenses. During the spring that Timothy celebrated his ninth birthday, British troops held his father a prisoner of war. In 1780 the colonel became one of the original grantees of Montpelier, Vermont, but the tract had little liquid value during the following years. Indicating the gravity of the Bigelows' predicament, the Harvard faculty recorded a threat to dismiss Timothy during his senior year unless he paid his bill. Evidently a scholarship resolved this crisis. Never quite readapting to civilian occupations, the elder Bigelow struggled to rebuild his trade in iron goods during the economic depression in the second half of the decade. After the death of one of his sons in 1787, the war-worn veteran plunged into a profound despondancy. Timothy abandoned plans to emigrate to Ohio and set up a law practice less than thirty miles away in

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[10] Lincoln, History of Worcester, p. 266; David G. Allen, Robert J. Taylor, Marc Friedlaender, and Celeste Walker, eds., Diary of John Quincy Adams, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2:67, 78; Loring, Boston Orators, p. 301.

Groton, a town then about the same size as Worcester.[11]

At first, clients did not flock into Bigelow's office, but he soon developed connections within the community that provided him with more than local stature. In 1791, a year and a half after his father's death, he married a daughter of a probate judge in Groton. Bigelow helped to found the academy there and to institute the society of Middlesex Husbandmen. When he delivered his Phi Beta Kappa oration in 1796, he had begun his long career in the state legislature. Affiliated with a variety of voluntary associations throughout his life, Bigelow served as a militia captain and an officer of the Freemasons. His activities throughout the early 1790s reflected his commitment to advancing and defending his interests within the structures of the Massachusetts elite, without promoting any fundamental changes.[12]

Twenty-nine years old when he spoke at the invitation of the Harvard chapter, Bigelow had not participated in undergraduate meetings for more than ten years. During that time, he observed how Americans' debates over fraternal organizations and voluntary associations represented their disagreements about economic and political stratifications.

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[11] Lincoln, History of Worcester, pp. 267, 279-80, 311; Loring, Boston Orators, p. 301; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 5:422; Harvard College, Faculty Records, 5:208, 229, HUA; Harvard College, Corporation Records, 3:255, HUA; Samuel A. Green, The Population of Groton at Different Times (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1888), p. 8.

[12] Lincoln, History of Worcester, pp. 267-68, 280; Loring, Boston Orators, p. 303; Samuel A. Green, An Account of the Lawyers of Groton, Massachusetts (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1892), pp. 19, 31.

Some people expressed their aversion to hereditary prerogatives by charging that groups like the Cincinnati and exclusive social clubs sought to aggrandize provincial aristocracies. Others demonstrated their fears of egalitarian arrangements by denouncing democratic and republican societies as dangerous bastions of radicalism. In his assessment of the Phi Beta Kappa, Bigelow endeavored to show that it inclined toward neither extreme.[13]

Early in his talk, Bigelow flatly denied that the chapter's founders had intended to provide special treatment for either its undergraduates or alumni.

> It was not adopted here with an idea of attaching to its members superior privileges, or arrogating to them an invidious distinction. No expectations were formed that the connexion would afford a dispensation from any of the duties of scholastic life, or independently insure success in the world.

Unlike a title in a system of nobility, affiliation with the club could not by itself bring favors, either in college or afterwards, according to Bigelow. Rather he insisted that not only academic standing but social prestige and even luck depended solely on achievement: "It was well understood that respectability here, and eminence and good fortune through life, were exclusively attached to ability, information and merit." By granting an exaggerated role to acquired status, Bigelow tried to refute accusations of undeserved preferment directed at the Phi Beta Kappa. He also was legitimating his own capacity to earn a stature he could not inherit from his family.[14]

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[13] William T. Hastings, Phi Beta Kappa as a Secret Society with Its Relations to Freemasonry and Antimasonry (Richmond, VA: William Byrd Press, 1965), chap. 2; Dorothy A. Lipson, Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), chap. 3, 7; David H. Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 110-12.

While contending that students belonging to the society judged each other on the basis of their accomplishments, Bigelow also attested to the importance placed on conformity to genteel norms. "A literary accountability to the whole," he maintained, produced "not only industry, but a circumspection of mind, an endeavor at classic purity and correctness." "Free communication" had beneficial consequences, he acknowledged, because the group encouraged discussion only on "proper subjects." In Bigelow's view, too great an emphasis on learning might stifle the polish needed to move in the dominant circles. Aided by the Phi Beta Kappa's exercises and vigilence, he maintained, individuals could avoid "pedantry and hesitation" while developing "ease and ready resource."[15]

In elucidating the Phi Beta Kappa's methods for fostering the conventional qualities expected of leaders, Bigelow dissociated it from organizations that threatened to disrupt established authorities. He pointed out that unlike some college clubs that condoned rowdiness, the Harvard chapter had helped preserve discipline since its founding fifteen years before.

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[14] Bigelow, Oration, p. 6.

[15] Ibid., p. 7.

> During all which time, irregularities of conduct, riot, tumult and disorder have uniformly been discountenanced; and due subordination and a regard to order have been enjoined and practiced. Many advantages therefore have resulted to the University, and perhaps to society itself.

In the final portion of this statement, the orator was linking the fraternity's assistance in quelling rebellion on campus with a desire to prevent revolution generally.[16]

In the mid 1790s, some Americans were castigating their political opponents for forming associations prepared to challenge the ascendency of the nation's rulers. Because Bigelow advocated upward mobility by means of an alliance with the old elite rather than by recasting the spheres of power, he wanted to assure his listeners that as a vehicle for self-improvement the Phi Beta Kappa did not jeopardize postwar hierarchies. Clearly he hoped that students who accepted the principles of precedence he approved would propagate these patterns when they entered the adult world.

Bigelow employed similar arguments in an attempt to vindicate the social value of fraternal organizations. Just as the Harvard chapter sought to stimulate academic attainments, so, he declared, "the community" as a whole found its interests "undoubtedly advanced by the information and ability of its members." Invoking a basic tenet of republicanism, Bigelow observed that "a general diffusion of knowledge and literature is thought essentially necessary to the preservation of a free government." But he had praised the Phi

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[16] Ibid., p. 8.

Beta Kappa more for enforcing respectable behavior and refining polite manners than for nurturing intellectual brilliance. So, in the broader realm, Bigelow warned that the "benefit...does not fully result to society, unless the powers of the head are connected with goodness of heart." In his view, a civilized person could not merely increase in erudition, for "the man will be but a savage still, with greater ability to gratify his uncorrected propensities."[17]

Bigelow, however, was not recommending ignorance. Following his earlier reasoning about worthy individuals obtaining the skills needed for leadership, he assumed that education would supply the virtues he demanded in his neighbors. According to Bigelow, "a proportional correction" in "disposition" had to accompany "improvement of mind." As the source of such training, he looked to mutual improvement associations resembling the Phi Beta Kappa.

> Those societies, therefore, must be importantly useful, which make a reciprocal friendship a part of their constitutions. For, it is from the cultivation of private attachments, that we learn to extend our affection to a general philanthropy.

Through practice, Bigelow was contending, individuals without family ties could universalize their regard for one another into a concern for the welfare of all humanity. By stressing the gradual amelioration of character by institutions "calculated to soften the manners," he was protecting them against the opprobrium connected with unsettling ideas about rapid and drastic reformations in "the condition of mankind."[18]

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[17] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Bigelow also sought to dispel suspicions concerning the hierarchical aspects of some organizations. In a section on the Freemasons, he downplayed the aristocratic pretensions inherent in their gradations of rank. Drawing an analogy with the Phi Beta Kappa, Bigelow implied that both orders subscribed to the same fundamental purpose, animating their members' "fraternal attachment to each other." Probably disingenuously, given his later prominence in the society, he denied any familiarity "with the secrets of Masonry." Whatever the particulars hidden from the public, the noble goal the two associations supposedly shared held no mysteries for him.

> But certain I am that a cultivation of the tender and social affections, and the consequent extension of our benevolence to a general philanthropy, is the most important, the most honorable principle that any fraternity can profess. If ever this was a secret, thank God, it is now rapidly developing, or is already unfolded to society at large.

According to Bigelow, such institutions served an especially valuable function "in barbarous or tumultuous times." Along with precautions like secrecy, he conceded, "some of the benefits which they would produce are happily superseded by the tranquil state of our country, and the mild manners of a polished and enlightened age."[19]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., pp. 9-11; Hastings, Phi Beta Kappa, chap. 1-2; Lipson, Freemasonry, chap. 4, 7; Wilson C. McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 205-6.

When Bigelow celebrated "the antiquity and universality" of the "Masonic Establishment" and applauded the disclosure of its central doctrine, he indicated several of his presuppositions about the nature of human interactions. In his theory, personal bonds had little to do with kinship. Instead, individuals explicitly consented to obey certain rules in their dealings with their fellows. Although this contractual behavior did not occur spontaneously, presumably anyone willing to make the effort could learn it. Freemasons, at least according to their own legends, had abided by this code since the dawn of history, despite the hostility of the "uncivilized" multitudes. Furthermore, they pledged to discharge their duties wherever they went. Initiated into an international community of strangers who nonetheless recognized each other as "brothers," these cosmopolitans could feel superior to local customs.[20]

Substantially, Bigelow was taking as the universal ideal the pattern of relationships that brought him professional success. The type of knowledge he had garnered had actually increased his power in the world in which he operated; therefore, he defined progress in terms of the wider dissemination of the information required for everyone to carry out rational exchanges. To buttress his conception, Bigelow employed a version of Enlightenment philosophy that allowed him to translate truths relevant to his own situation into scientific laws. In his attack on obligations determined purely by heredity, he could cite reason as the authority for making improvements that worked to his advantage. With this deductive component, however, Bigelow combined a sense of propriety about deportment that accentuated the empirical constraints set by present circumstances. Whenever he needed to discredit a precept that might imperil his own position, he could insist on the limitations hindering transformations suggested by logical consistency.

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[20] Bigelow, Oration, p. 9; Lipson, Freemasonry, chap. 1-2; McWilliams, Idea of Fraternity, pp. 205-6.

In the last third of his talk, Bigelow put this interpretive scheme to work in an evaluation of recent headway against traditional practices. "Comparing the state of mankind with what it was scarce more than a century" before, he mustered evidence to show "how immensely...it [had] improved." In his illustrations, Bigelow extolled the modifications that curtailed socially ascribed responsibilities, replacing them with uniform legal instruments to regulate the public sphere and with the autonomous conscience to supervise private deeds. Throughout the world, he observed, "most countries" guaranteed travellers' "equal rights to protection and relief" and allowed them "the free admission and departure" indispensable for transacting their business. Even armed violence conformed to the model he approved: "Wars in general are no longer personal, but national." Alluding to an instance from his youth, Bigelow affirmed that enemy captives were "treated with politeness." But no one, in his estimation, had advanced into the new era as far as Americans. Bigelow exulted over the manner in which they handled economic hardship. "The poor are provided for by standing laws....Individuals, also have uniformly discovered alacrity and zeal to avert the dangers with which others were threatened, and have liberally contributed to repair unmerited misfortunes." Benevolent associations relieved refugees escaping from reactionary regimes and defied nature's hazards with measures "to restore persons apparently dead to life and the embraces of their anxious friends." Again he assigned to voluntary societies a crucial intermediary role between the narrow functions of government and exclusively self-regarding matters.[21]

Despite these gains, Bigelow admitted that the United States had "not arrived at perfection." To remedy two defects in particular, he urged "the exercise of a generous ambition." The first involved his own area of expertise. Bigelow sought to "revise, and to mitigate in many cases," the "codes of criminal law, by endeavoring to make a reformation of the offender, instead of his extirpation, the object of punishment." To further this aim, he proposed converting prisons "from seminaries of wickedness and villany into schools of morality." The nation could expunge the second blemish Bigelow found if it would "liberate the unhappy Africans from the horrors of a slavery equally unjust and inhuman." He favored changes that would "promote an interchange of good offices, and a mild and pacific disposition among mankind." They fit his overall design for a commonwealth of well-educated and well-disposed people who controlled themselves through reciprocal compacts.[22]

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[21] Bigelow, Oration, pp. 11-12.

To induce the alterations he desired, Bigelow trusted to a method that testified to his qualms about deviating too much from current usages: "We will lend our individual assistance, as circumstances may permit, and endeavor to give a tone to the public opinion." He tried to demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy by attributing political movements elsewhere to the influence of America's example. "Our country has already taught the world the true science of government, and the art to be free." Bigelow predicted that this process could produce the uncoerced charity needed to compensate for the inadequacies of his individualistic framework. "Why then shall we not instruct the species in the arts of humanity, and the science of universal friendship?" With this confidence in the impact the Phi Beta Kappa could expect to engender by "due exertion,...even in a few, in various places and different walks of life," he maintained his careful balance between exhilaration over the disappearance of inherited "gradations of rank" and apprehension about social disorder.[23]

III

In December of 1796, the year that Timothy Bigelow addressed the Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, a Yale meeting heard Charles Chauncey deliver an oration on "the refinement of the oriental nations." His remarks on that occasion have apparently not survived, but the speech which the chapter invited him to give on the day before the 1797 commencement was the first such discourse published in New Haven. The society's records do not explain why it had this particular offering printed. Probably the desire to emulate the example set with Bigelow's talk played no small part. If improving the organization's public image was the goal, neither the performer's personal prestige nor his views on "the scientific and moral improvements of the present age" could hurt the cause. Belonging to an eminent family and possessing a reputation for distinguished scholarship, Chauncey turned an enthusiastic endorsement of Enlightenment philosophy into a justification of the existing elite's power.[24]

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[22] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[23] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Born in New Haven in 1777, Chauncey grew up enjoying the cosmopolitan atmosphere that attracted Simeon Baldwin to the city. During Charles's youth, Baldwin studied law in the office of the elder Chauncey, attorney for the state of Connecticut. Charles's mother belonged to a New Haven family with important mercantile, professional, and political connections. Throughout the 1780s, while the city's culture became more sophisticated and its economy more complex, the Chaunceys gained stature and influence. In 1789 Charles's father accepted an appointment as a judge of the Connecticut Superior Court. The family had a substantial stake in the social and political structures that prevailed in New Haven after the War for Independence.[25]

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[24] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 5, 1796, September 12, 1797, September 14, 1797; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Register of the Phi Beta Kappa"; Chauncey, Oration.

At the age of ten, Charles passed Yale's entrance examination. This accomplishment, unusual even then, reflected not only the boy's mental capacities, but also some of the characteristics of his upbringing. In general, students from well-to-do families went to college at an earlier age than their poorer classmates. Children in Chauncey's situation did not have to interrupt their preparations when their families could not pay school bills or required their labor at home. In addition to a steady attendance at the Grammar School in New Haven, Charles possessed an even less common advantage. Candidates for the bar frequently tutored the children of the lawyer directing their studies. As the eldest son of a prominent attorney, Charles benefited from the presence of a large number of recent college graduates who, like Simeon Baldwin, wanted to receive their training in the city's congenial surroundings.[26]

Having deferred his admission to Yale, Chauncey planned to enter with the class of 1792. Because of "Illness &

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[25] See above pp. 46-47. Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 6 vols. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1885-1912), 1:642-43 and 5:8; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 14:221.

[26] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 5:8; William C. Fowler, Memorials of the Chaunceys (Boston: Henry W. Dutton & Son, Printers, 1858), p. 120.

Lameness," however, he did not begin until February 1789. To ensure that he could pick up the lessons in progress, his instructors "appointed him to be examined as usual." The regular application of the rules in his case provoked a rift between the scholastic and the political elite. The Chaunceys would not tolerate such treatment of Charles, according to the records kept by Yale's president, Ezra Stiles: "This Evening his Father waited upon me & refused to have him examined, & took him away from College, desiring his Name to be erased from the College Bills: and accordingly he is no longer to be considered as a Student of this College." Two weeks later, an intermediary approached the president to negotiate a truce. Charles arrived for his test, but only after Stiles had conveyed to the emissary, "to be by him delivered to Mr. Chauncey[, a] note for £15. on Demand for Law Tuition" rendered to the college president's son a decade earlier. The judge expected his position to guarantee his son certain privileges. If Charles had to meet the same requirements as every other Yale student, then his father would not accord Stiles any financial preferment.[27]

During Chauncey's undergraduate years, the curriculum incorporated more elements of Enlightenment learning. They replaced some of the traditional exercises and texts that no longer appeared useful for students who expected to assume positions of leadership at the end of the eighteenth century. After 1789, upperclassmen no longer had to practice Latin syllogistic arguments once a month. The college did not abandoned the classics, however, as Chauncey demonstrated by participating in a Greek dialog at his commencement. Old books eliminated from recitations left room for new subjects and titles, including some by American authors.[28]

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[27] Ezra Stiles, "Notebook Journal of the Yale College Academic Year," February 4-20, 1789, Beinecke Rare Book Library, New Haven, CT.

In 1789 Stiles began to expand the requirements in political philosophy for the seniors, whom he instructed personally. The reorganization of the United States government under the new federal Constitution and the beginning of the French Revolution made the timing of this innovation especially appropriate. While Chauncey was at Yale, Stiles added Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws, Vattel's Law of Nations, and Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy to the senior course. A year later juniors also undertook the study of political theory, reading Joseph Priestley's Lectures on History and General Policy, an analysis of republicanism through historical discourse.[29]

Students enrolled during the winter of 1789 witnessed the arrival of a large shipment of scientific apparatus from England. With these mechanical devices, the instructors could illustrate the natural laws governing the universe.

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[28] Edmund S. Morgan, The Gentle Puritan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 395; E. L. Cleaveland, "The Governor Gilbert Lot," Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society 1(1865):132.

[29] Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 389-91.

Ownership of this equipment secured Yale's place among American universities. Its use in the classroom confirmed the college's commitment to the experimental approach of the Enlightenment.[30]

During Chauncey's final undergraduate term, the Connecticut Assembly reached a compromise with the Yale Corporation on several matters they had disputed for many years. When the state legislature appointed a committee to investigate the college, it included members of an ambitious faction dissatisfied with the monopoly on offices maintained by a few families. Despite this potential for trouble, the committee submitted an extremely favorable report. In particular, it praised the recent revisions in the curriculum: "the literary exercises of the respective Classes have of late Years undergone considerable Alterations, so as the better to accomodate the Education of the Undergraduates to the present State of Literature." This statement implied that Yale graduates possessed the polish they would need among the new nation's elite.[31]

Although the Assembly's committee commended the college's intellectual environment, it deemed the students' immersion in city life morally unwholesome. Chauncey, like a number of his classmates, lived at home while enrolled at Yale. About half the undergraduates, some without nearby relatives, were "obliged to furnish themselves with lodgings in the town for want of room in the College." Many more obtained their meals off campus. This situation, according to the committee's report, had "a tendency to introduce an unsteady, disorderly spirit, [took] off the attention of the student from the proper objects of his pursuit, and [led] him to form unprofitable, idle and vicious connections." Although overcrowded living quarters and indifferent food impelled the youths to seek better accommodations from New Haven's inhabitants, they also escaped the confines within which the college could more strictly enforce discipline. The legislators were trying to guard these young Americans from the corruption that might taint them in the worldly mileau of the port. In urging a greater attention to the academic program, however, they indicated that they saw no dangers in an exposure to the Enlightenment ideas available at Yale.[32]

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[30] Ibid., pp. 380-81.

[31] Ibid., pp. 414-19.

Instead of criticizing the administrators for allowing their charges access to the community, the Assembly offered them a substantial sum of money to cover the cost of a more appealing dormitory. In exchange, the Yale Corporation, composed entirely of Congregational ministers, had to admit the eight highest officers of the state government. These elected officials would comprise more than a third but less than a majority of the Fellows and would not vote in replacing clerical members. Although the corporation had itself suffered divisions over the years, generally along lines established by New Divinity theology, it agreed unanimously to accept the Assembly's proposal. This compromise reconciled the leaders of church and state who had been vying for control of Yale, but it further offended the religious dissenters who did not want their taxes to support a college dominated by the denomination already favored under the law.[33]

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[32] Ibid., pp. 422-23; Ezra Stiles, "Notebook Journal"; Yale College, Records, May 1792, YUA.

During the five years between Chauncey's graduation from Yale and the delivery of his second Phi Beta Kappa oration, he studied law with his father, who left the bench in 1793 to devote the remainder of his life to teaching. Two years later young Charles passed his bar examination, but he could not set up his own practice until he reached the age of twenty-one. In the period after he finished college, New Haven's residents were encountering the uneven stimulation and disruption of their commercial prosperity on account of the extremely unsettling international hostilities associated with the French Revolution. At the same time, domestic conflicts concerning America's future development intensified. Not surprisingly, individuals like Chauncey, who counted on succeeding through the preservation of the status quo, registered misgivings about drastic and violent measures advocated at home and abroad. In an instance noteworthy in the pattern of early Phi Beta Kappa addresses, Chauncey revealed his trepidation about the turbulent conditions by making an especially cautious evaluation of Enlightenment philosophy.[34]

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[33] Morgan, Gentle Puritan, pp. 419-20; M. Louise Greene, The Development of Religious Liberty in Connecticut (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), pp. 379-80.

In its celebration of scientific method, Chauncey's oration clearly exhibited the influence of his college education. According to the speaker, "sound deductions of reason from experimental observation" produced the most accurate knowledge. Like other enlightened systems of thought, Chauncey's embraced both empirical induction and logical inference. He attested to the impression made on him by the lectures demonstrating natural laws when he referred proudly "to the expensive and useful apparatus, invented for the experimental exemplification of principles, with which the closets of the learned are replete." In his praise for modern erudition, Chauncey based his assessments on his experiences at Yale.[35]

While acclaiming the recent progress in philosophy, Chauncey characterized inadequate hypotheses about the functioning of the universe. These erroneous interpretations he described as "heterogeneous compositions, of the most absurd theories produced by the imagination, blended with principles adventiously discovered." In other words, in an explanation Chauncey considered invalid, fantasy replaced reason and ideas encountered by chance substituted for evidence derived from careful experiment. Throughout his argument, he generally attributed such mistaken techniques to the "ancient philosopher and the modern savage." Only by adhering to scientific procedures could a scholar hope to maintain credibility in the late eighteenth century, according to Chauncey: "The pretended philosopher, who attempts the introduction of a new theory, supported by sophisticated reasoning, and unsupported by the sound logick of experiment, builds his fame upon a sandy foundation."[36]

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[34] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 5:8; W. C. Fowler, Memorials, p. 120; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 14:221; Chauncey, Oration.

[35] Ibid., pp. 5, 10.

Given his acknowledgement of the persistence of misguided thinking in his own era, Chauncey's definition of its form took on added significance. He was discrediting concepts drawn from the mind alone, no matter how refined the logic. Chauncey reinforced this point with consistently disparaging allusions to "speculations." Among the various configurations of Enlightenment philosophy, he concluded, ill effects would more likely ensue from an overdependence on mental exertions than from an undue heed to the facts at hand.

Chauncey elaborated on this notion when he discussed moral philosophy. He called its study a science, but because he believed it unsuited to "mathematical demonstration, or philosophical experiment," he pronounced it "a most ample field for the production of theoretical fallacy." According to Chauncey, efforts to advance knowledge in this area merely proved the inescapable feebleness of the human mind - "the contracted limits of its powers, and the native weakness of its faculties." He endorsed "revealed truth" as the only sure guide to ethics.[37]

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[36] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

In this section on moral science, Chauncey expounded in more detail on the pitfalls of faulty philososphy. Invoking the Enlightenment doctrine of nature's uniformity, he remarked that in "ancient time, no established systems of moral principles" had universal acceptance. In academies of that day, Chauncey declared, "the instructions of their sages more intimately concerned the quibbles of sophistry, than the morals of men." He was contending that this training, from which the recently defunct tradition of Latin syllogisms claimed its ancestry, concentrated on the formalities of debate without regard for content or for the consequences on behavior. Assuming that incorrect ideas caused improper conduct, Chauncey condemned the extremes of passivity and dissipation represented for him by the foremost classical schools. He deprecated both the "stubborn pride, the senseless apathy, and the fancied, but mistaken dignity of Stoicism, and the sensual excesses and extravagant licentiousness of the Epicurean philosophy." Chauncey maintained that the Bible, on the other hand, inculcated "simple, practical, energetick moral principles." In his estimation, his contemporaries needed precepts that would motivate them to decisive action without encouraging them to indulge either their basest appetites or their wildest dreams of perfection.[38]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Chauncey specifically assailed "the advocates of the modern sceptical Philosophy." Their "talents and information," he affirmed, were "but wretchedly calculated to afford support to a *fallacy*, which is the miserable subterfuge of vice and immorality." Skeptics had challenged the existence of God in order to sanction their own debauchery, Chauncey suggested, but their intellects had not proven equal to the task. While he supposed that decadence would result from false reasoning, he did not presume that learning automatically produced scrupulous morals: "It has ever been a trait in the character of man, that, upon this subject, he is more ready to speculate, than to practice, and more inclined to favor others with instruction, than to reverence established principles by his own obedience."[39]

In another comparison favorable to the moderns, Chauncey attributed belief in divinely inspired government to ignorance among the people ruled: "The systems of ancient legislators, which were frequently supposed by a credulous and stupid multitude, to proceed, not from the reason and understanding of man, but directly from the councils of heaven, were usually planted in the weakness of the human mind, and cherished by the utmost absurdity of human superstition." Although he thought ethics required the aid of revelation, he wanted to expel religion from the realm of politics.[40]

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[38] Ibid., pp. 13-15.

[39] Ibid., pp. 12, 24.

In keeping with his philosophy's balance between induction and deduction, Chauncey distinguished between the errors of "speculative [and] practical politicians":

> The former, from their enthusiasm and ignorance of the nature of man, have usually paid, in their speculations, but little attention to the practical operation of the systems they have constructed in the closet; and the latter, from their ambition and desire of personal aggrandizement, have commonly paid still less, in their administration, to the promotion of the general happiness.

Improvements in policy, as in natural science, he insisted, "must be the result of a lengthy and continued perseverance in experiment."[41]

According to Chauncey, the legislator who abided by scientific guidelines would take as a "general object... promoting the knowledge, the virtue, and happiness of his fellow-men." As the best means of achieving this end, Chauncey singled out two elements of the federal Constitution that reflected his inclination not to alter current arrangements. He extolled the merits "of a perfect representation of the people in the government itself," and of the separation "of the legislative, judicial and executive powers." Deflecting the charge that republics inevitably deteriorated into "the terrors of despotism," Chauncey judged far worse "the miseries, produced by the jarring interests, the conflicting passions, and the separate ambition of the members who compose a potent aristocracy." Given the advantage he obtained from prevailing American institutions, he had no incentive to replace them with structures that imitated European hierarchies. Instead Chauncey entered a plea for education, the presumed source of his own superiority. He proclaimed "the knowledge and the virtue of the citizens...the essential, and only substantial support of a rational constitution."[42]

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[40] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[41] Ibid., pp. 15, 18.

Pursuing the point he had made about ethics, Chauncey granted that "a more refined acquaintance with the real principles of" politics did "not lead to a rigid observance of the dictates of nature." In his opinion, even charitable intentions joined with extraordinary intelligence - "Genius and benevolence" - could only "unite in speculation" without tools for enforcing "the Laws of Nations." For Chauncey, "the feeble injunctions of reason" and "the detestation of the good" could not match "the pride and the interests of the mighty." While lauding the progress of Enlightenment science, he allowed ample room for human shortcomings.[43]

Engaged in a topic of debate popular in the late eighteenth century, Chauncey had to address the common objection that headway in the areas of inquiry open to investigation by reason and experiment actually fostered corruption:

> The assertion is frequently made, that the human race

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[42] Ibid., pp. 16-18.

[43] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

> are rapidly degenerating in MORALITY and VIRTUE; and that the supposed improvement of the Species, in SCIENCE and POLICY, will afford but little matter for exultation, when connected with the consideration of their real advancement in immorality and vice.

Many Americans who did not expect to benefit from the development of international commerce saw their nation's transition from provincialism to cosmopolitanism as a process of decay. Chauncey admitted that the country's "primitive fathers" exemplified "an unprecedented purity of life," which did not "mark the character of their descendants." By attributing "the present declension" to "the rapid progess of a rising nation," he could blame the decline in rectitude on a rate of change that threatened his personal security. Although historical circumstances did not tranform human nature, Chauncey declared, enlightenment could mitigate its defects: "Men are possessed of the same appetites and passions, in every age; but their influence is widely variant, as they are more or less modified and meliorated by civilization and improvement."[44]

The orator listed three factors which he "numbered among the causes of the improvement, and adduced as proof of the advancement of the present age." First Chauncey insisted that "publick institutions" had to provide for "the education of youth." Then he contrasted the "numerous associations, for the promotion of Science, in Europe and America" with "the fantastick institutions of chivalry, which have amused the Princes of Europe, and fascinated their subjects." Finally Chauncey emphasized the importance of "a state of mental and of personal freedom." Because of "the economy of the human disposition," he assumed,

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[44] Ibid., pp. 24-26.

> the mind of man must be conscious of the necessity of its exertions, and yet be sensible, that those exertions are neither, in passive compliance with the authoritative will of a master, nor in slavish subserviency to the advancement of the profit or pleasure of a prince, in order to give energy and success to its inventive faculties.

In his discussion of philosophy, Chauncey decried systems which he deemed capable of engendering either inertia or iniquity. Here he was similarly urging a middle course that stimulated creative activity while avoiding both subjugation to outside direction and frantic endeavors to pander to the whims of a patron.[45]

Chauncey also noted "various causes, which have a tendency to retard the progress of refinement," concentrating on two he found "most obviously operative" in the United States. Not coincidentally, these trends endangered the path to greatness through learning by which the speaker planned to preserve the stature he inherited.[46]

Chauncey lamented the "restless ambition for political preferment" that had "obtained an universal prevalence." According to him, such conduct sacrificed the general good to the "acquisition of personal interest, and the extension of personal power." Chauncey further contended that these individuals were really miscalculating their tactics:

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[45] Ibid., pp. 4-5, 27-30.

[46] Ibid., p. 30.

> For it is a fact, supported by experience, that the fame and reputation of the man, who has enlarged the boundaries of science, by a single useful discovery in mechanicks, is placed upon a more durable and substantial basis, than that of the warmest and most bigotted political partizan.

He wanted to believe that the prestige attending "political elevation" did not last as long as the distinction earned from scholarship.[47]

On corresponding grounds, Chauncey deplored the "prevalence of a similar absurd attachment to the rapid and boundless acquisition of property." He did not object to anyone enjoying the fruits of hard labor because he imagined that this method of distribution would prevent unjust disparities: "An equality of property in this country naturally excites a spirit of emulation for its acquisition, which is the parent of that honest industry, which is productive of real wealth, and which preserves the equality of the people." Chauncey differentiated such honorable toil from "a species of enterprize, unfavourable to Science, to Morals, and to our political equality, and productive only of ideal wealth." He was referring to speculation, especially in government securities and bank shares. The price of these instruments depended on public confidence or credulity instead of something Chauncey judged tangible. Toward "ideal wealth" he directed the same antipathy he showed for "speculative" philosophy. In his next sentence, he disclosed tha occasion for his concern about avarice:

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[47] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

> The acquisition of knowledge is, consequently, esteemed of less importance, than the acquisition of property, and the morality of the means is seldom considered by the votaries of sudden wealth. The general prevalence of this taste among the people produces the attachment of less veneration and esteem to the possessions and acquisitions of Genius and of Learning, than to the pomp and splendor of affluence.

Both for himself and, more altruistically, for the future of the Enlightenment, he worried that mere riches might replace cultivation as an indication of status.[48]

In his conclusion, Chauncey tried to reconcile his anxieties about political and economic forces that jeopardized his social standing with his enthusiasm for the glorious reforms possible through the experimental sciences. Although a single country might still revert to "barbarism," he surmised that a universal "dissemination of principles" would keep "civilized life" from undergoing another total eclipse:

> Individual nations may be enlightened by refinement, and, through the operation of adventitious causes, may be again subjected to darkness and ignorance. But the advancement of the human race is too general and extensive to suffer a material declension.

But in his endorsement of the ideas he had imbibed at Yale under Stiles, Chauncey carefully dissociated everything he approved from any intellectual construction that might invite radical consequences. More clearly and consistently than in the other surviving Phi Beta Kappa orations examined thus far, he assumed that an unsound philosophy would generate unwelcome actions. Knowledge might be increasing around the world, but Chauncey had doubts about America's prospects.[49]

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[48] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

IV

Less than three months after Chauncey's Phi Beta Kappa performance on the day before commencement in 1797, the Yale chapter's anniversary meeting heard a discourse by Ebenezer G. Marsh. This address, on the sources and characteristics of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, appeared in print the following year. Marsh applied the methods of Enlightenment science to a topic Chauncey had not treated. What his research implied for divinity, however, did not differ substantially from Chauncey's theories about politics and society.[50]

Born in Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1777, six months before Chauncey, Marsh became the eldest child of a Congregational minister and his wife. His father, well-known for his refined intellect and taste, maintained a moderate theology in an era when controversies were dividing churches and educational institutions. John Marsh held to his middle path so successfully that he received an honorary Master of Arts from Yale in 1774 and a doctorate in divinity from Harvard, his alma mater, in 1806 while a member of the Yale Corporation. The orator's mother belonged to a wealthy family from Windsor, a town farther up the Connecticut River. Her father, Ebenezer Grant, whose name her first son bore, engaged in the West Indian trade and owned the vicinity's main inn. The Marsh family occupied an extremely comfortable place in their community.[51]

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[49] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[50] Yale Phi Beta Kappa, "Records of the PBK," December 5, 1797; Marsh, Oration.

During the eighteenth century Wethersfield prospered as a commercial center. Small ships built in its yards sailed along the American coast and to the West Indies, carrying the usual Connecticut exports in addition to the renowned Wethersfield onions. The town's inhabitants not only financed these voyages but often supplied the crews. Early manufacturing ventures played a less important role in the economy. For its size, the community enjoyed an admirable level of culture, a significant factor in the Marsh family's settlement there. The Wethersfield congregation, which included thirty college graduates, paid Ebenezer's father a salary higher than that of any other minister in the state. The conditions under which Marsh spent his youth encouraged him to give a academic bent to religion.[52]

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[51] Dexter, Biographical Sketches, 1:323, 5:153-55; John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, 17 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873-1975), 15:73-78; William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 9 vols. (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1857-69) 1:619-23.

[52] Lois M. Wieder, The Wethersfield Story (Stonington, CT: Pequot Press, 1966), pp. 24-25; Sibley and Shipton, Graduates of Harvard, 15:75; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 1:619-23; James Dana, A Sermon on the Much Lamented Death of Mr. Ebenezer Grant Marsh, Tutor, and Professor Elect of Languages and Ecclesiastical History, in Yale College (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1803), p. 18; Bancroft Fowler, An Oration on the Death of Mr. Ebenezer Grant Marsh, Senior Tutor, Hebrew Instructor, and Professor Elect of Languages and Ecclesiastical History, in Yale College, Who Died on the 16th of November 1803, in the 27th Year of His Age (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1804), pp. 3-5.

Marsh entered Yale in 1791, a year before Chauncey completed his studies there. During the rest of Ezra Stiles's presidency, the college curriculum did not undergo any major modifications. Stiles's death in May 1795 produced the most drastic change at Yale while Marsh was an undergraduate. The day before his commencement, the college inaugurated a new president, Timothy Dwight, who undertook a campaign to combat the cosmopolitan atmosphere Stiles had fostered. Eighteen when he obtained his bachelor's degree, Marsh may not have been as precocious as Chauncey but he had earned an even greater reputation for erudition. Having won a fellowship for graduate study, he remained at Yale, specializing in Hebrew.[53]

In the most technical of the existing Phi Beta Kappa orations, Marsh defended studies of classical and Near Eastern literature. He expressed his dismay over the "opinion...current among [American] students" that his chosen field did not deserve their attention. Attributing this prejudice to "a corrupt taste," Marsh sought to disprove the notion "that a knowledge of the learned, or, as they are otherwise denominated, the dead languages, is in no way essential to the study of our own language, and, indeed, that it is productive of no valuable purpose whatever." Although his appraisal of antiquity differed from Chauncey's, he covered similar ground in refuting his adversaries' position: "They do not consider, that this knowledge is the key to a great proportion of the sciences." Marsh associated the Enlightenment's advances with accomplishments in the ancient tongues.[54]

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[53] Dexter, *Biographical Sketches*, 5:153-55; Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, 1:23; Dana, *Sermon*, p. 18; Bancroft Fowler, *Oration*, p. 3.

Furthermore, the young Hebraist presumed that utilizing the latest philological methods would support the school of Congregational orthodoxy represented by his father and Ezra Stiles. A friend who later testified to Marsh's devotion to useful pursuits stated that "the chief object of his studies was, to contribute his share towards establishing the truth and illustrating the meaning of the Holy Scriptures." In his speech for the Yale Phi Beta Kappa, Marsh was trying to demonstrate that "the most respectable dialects...all had one common parent, and [that] we may rationally conclude that this was the Hebrew." By showing that every modern language came from this root, he expected to confirm the accuracy and the importance of the Old Testament as a historical document.[55]

Marsh adopted techniques of biblical criticism that relied on the power of human reason to compensate for gaps and inconsistencies in the written records. He clearly believed that these procedures would verify the authenticity of divine revelation. Frequently Marsh claimed to have corroborated incidents described in the Bible with evidence derived from linguistic analysis:

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[54] Marsh, Oration, p. 3.

[55] Bancroft Fowler, Oration, p. 5; Marsh, Oration, p. 9.

> The Arabic, particularly the Koreish, the Chaldaic, Ethiopian, Phenician, Egyptian, and Persian, are said, by philogists, to be only different dialects of one common parent. And, it is well known, that those countries, in which each one of these dialects was spoken, were settled by the descendants of Noah, not long after the deluge.

To keep Enlightenment scholarship from threatening his religious convictions, he had to disavow the conflicting findings arrived at by other interpreters who employed the same methodology.[56]

Marsh selected certain elements from late eighteenth century science in order to justify his theology. He could dismiss as imperfect formulations of real knowledge new ideas that challenged the doctrines he accepted. Marsh's discourse exemplified the process by which he reconciled his enlightened education and assumptions compatible with his family's privileged circumstances.

V

In 1798 the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa orator, John T. Kirkland, presented extremely partisan political views that met with his audience's approval. Born into a family committed to missionary work, he preferred to cast his lot with the eastern Massachusetts elite. Hoping to preserve the prevailing distribution of privileges, Kirkland counselled Americans to "shirk from innovation." Asserting the weakness of "unaided reason," he traced demands for greater equality to the influence of "infidel philosophy."[57]

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[56] Ibid., p. 7; Jurgen Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), chap. 4; Jerry W. Brown, The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800-1870: The New England Scholars (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969); Herbert Hovenkamp, Science and Religion in America, 1800-1860 ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), chap. 4.

At the time of Kirkland's birth in 1770, his parents were struggling to convert the Indians of central New York. His mother was staying near Little Falls when she delivered John and a twin brother. Until Kirkland reached the age of two, the family lived together at Oneida. When American controversies with the British increased the danger on the frontier, the children moved to New England with their mother, a niece of Eleazar Wheelock. Kirkland passed the remainder of his boyhood on a small farm in Stockbridge, a rural town in the western part of Massachusetts and the site of a famous Indian mission.[58]

Kirkland's father, one of the youngest children of an impoverished Connecticut minister, had received his education under Wheelock's sponsorship. In the course of Dartmouth's founding, his relationship with his mentor became strained. Thereafter the missionary labored under the auspices of philanthropic agencies in Boston. With no patrimony of his own, he depended entirely on charity for his support, much of which he spent on supplies for the Indians. During the War for Independence, he served as a chaplain in the American army and used his friendship with various tribes to keep them from aiding the British. His exertions won the admiration of many prominent people but left him little time or money for his family.[59]

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[57] Shapleigh to Marsh, December 28, 1798; John Pierce, "President Kirkland," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 29(1894):149; Kirkland, Oration, pp. 5, 14, 21.

[58] Alexander Young, A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Reverend John Thornton Kirkland (Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown, 1840), pp. 17-19; Samuel K. Lothrop, "Life of Samuel Kirkland, Missionary to the Indians," in The Library of American Biography, ed. Jared Sparks, 2nd ser., 15 vols. (Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown, 184 -8), 15:213-14, 229-32, 278-79; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:261-62; Pierce, "Kirkland," p. 144; John G. Palfrey, A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Reverend John Thornton Kirkland (Cambridge: John Owen, 1840), pp. 7-8; Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-36), 10:43.

In 1784 John T. Kirkland entered the academy in Andover, Massachusetts. One of the institution's patrons subsidized his schooling. After an examination, Kirkland joined the freshman class at Harvard in the spring of 1786. Having contributed to his family's undertakings, the college also reduced the tuition it charged him. Graduating in 1789, Kirkland's undergraduate years coincided with those of two previous Harvard orators, William Emerson and Thomas W. Hooper.[60]

During the winter vacation of his junior year, Kirkland volunteered for the army that put down the extralegal resistance in western Massachusetts. In his estimation, however, a personal event from this period held infinitely more significance - the death of his mother in January 1788. The following year Kirkland wrote a brief autobiography in which he paid tribute to her role in his education: "The highest pleasure I could enjoy was that of pleasing her; and her influence over me was so great that I never deviated from rectitude without feeling myself particulary culpable on her account."[61]

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[59] James McLachlan, Princetonians, 1748-1768: A Biographical Dictionary (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 502-6; Lothrop, "Samuel Kirkland," pp. 215-27, 234-55; Young, Discourse, pp. 14-18, 79-80.

[60] Harvard College, Faculty Records, 5:220; Young, Discourse, pp. 20, 24; Lothrop, "Samuel Kirkland," pp. 255-56; Palfrey, Discourse, p. 9; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:262; Pierce, "Kirkland," pp. 144-45; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 10:43.

In this same sketch, Kirkland lamented his lack of diligence while a student. "I wasted much time, much money, some virtue, and some health. For some irregularities I incurred my father's displeasure, and fell far short of his wishes or expectations in every thing." Harvard's records substantiated his self-recriminations with evidence of numerous fines for absences from recitations and prayers. Kirkland blamed his irregular conduct on his peers, who interpreted studiousness as a sign of intellectual deficiency. Nevertheless, he gained a reputation for scholarship and performed the salutatory oration in Latin at his commencement.[62]

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[61] Young, Discourse, pp. 21, 26; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:262; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 10:43.

[62] Harvard College, Faculty Records, 5:236, 240, 268, 282, 295, 305, 317, 6:7, 19, 36; Young, Discourse, pp. 21-23, 25-26; Palfrey, Discourse, pp. 9-12; Pierce, "Kirkland," p. 145.

After leaving Harvard, Kirkland taught for a year at the academy where he had prepared for college. During this period, he remained undecided about his choice of a profession, wavering between law and divinity. At the end of the school term, he went to Stockbridge to study with a minister noted for his Hopkinsianism. This theology repelled Kirkland, who returned to the more liberal atmosphere in Cambridge. Late in 1792, he accepted an appointment as tutor of logic and metaphysics at Harvard. Kirkland bemoaned the extent to which his duties distracted him from his career preparations. The next year, he received a call from a genteel Boston church. Kirkland was enjoying urbanity of this environment he when he spoke to the Phi Beta Kappa. In 1810, he became the president of Harvard.[63]

Kirkland frequently revealed his distaste for the life of an evangelist in the hinterlands. Having helped to relocate his siblings near Oneida, he cautioned their father against secluding them from society:

> I hope, my dear Sir, that you will not keep your daughters, while they are young and in the forming period of their lives, for a long time together in the western country. They cannot, and will not, there acquire those virtues and habits of thinking and acting, which will make them useful and pleasing.

Three years later, Kirkland published some of his observations of the Indians from this trip. Although he ascribed many of their problems to the misdeeds of whites, he saw their only salvation in an extirpation of "their savage habits" - a task for which he showed no enthusiasm. A line from a prayer Kirkland wrote shortly before his ordination most tellingly indicated his feelings about his absent family: "Where, O God! shall I look, but unto Thee, my Father, Guide, and Prop?"[64]

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[63] Young, Discourse, pp. 27-36; Pierce, "Kirkland," pp. 145-47, 149-50; Lothrop, "Samuel Kirkland," pp. 336-38; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, 8:263-64; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 10:43.

In 1795, a little more than a year after he entered the pastoral office, Kirkland preached an election sermon to the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in Boston. In it, he deplored the "atrocities and disorders" of the French Revolution, but he attributed them to an excusable "intoxication of freedom." Kirkland remarked that the French were imitating the example set in the United States.

> The American revolution has taken the film from the eyes of nations; and enabled them to read the eternal truths, inscribed by God on the heart of every human being; which declare, that men have equal rights, and that government is formed solely to secure them.

He expected liberty to spred: "This spirit will probably run on and kindle the flames of resistance in every country enslaved, and introduce a new order of things." Although Kirkland denounced "irreligion and scepticism" as "the poison of human peace and happiness," he trusted that "experience" would lead the enlightened "to seek a retreat from the darkness of doubt, and the tempests of passion." Kirkland's optimism about political progress and the eventual triumph of Christianity during the most violent phases of the tumult in France did not make him an anomaly among the New England clergy. Only in the year that he delivered this discourse did ministers' opinions begin to disclose a dread of upheaval.[65]

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[64] John T. Kirkland, "Queries Respecting Indians," Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for the Year M,DCC,XCV (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1795), pp. 68, 70-73; Lothrop, "Samuel Kirkland," pp. 327-28; Young, Discourse, p. 82.

Two months prior to the presentation of his Phi Beta Kappa address, Kirkland uttered far different sentiments, in keeping with the tone of a national fast day proclaimed by President John Adams.

> A revolution in a great nation, which seemed to begin in good principles; and not only to open a fair prospect of liberty and happiness to itself, but to be the aera of a glorious reformation of civil and ecclesiastical abuses in other countries..., has proved in its progress, a tremendous scourge to that nation and to a great part of the civilized world.

He not only declared "the vices and follies of superstition" better than "the wild theories of infidelity or the madness of Atheism"; he also judged the "tyranny of kings and nobles" superior to "democracy." According to Kirkland, the French were trying to impose the horrors of their new system on "all the nations within the reach of their ambition or influence." With these perils from abroad jeopardizing America's "neutral policy," he and many other clerics worried most about the "division at home," fomented by "an opposition, continually enfeebling the arm of government."[66]

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[65] John T. Kirkland, A Sermon, Preached Before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, in Boston, June 1, 1795, Being the Anniversary of their Election of Officers (Boston: Joseph Belknap, 1795), pp. 25-26, 28; Gary Nash, "The American Clergy and the French Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 22(1965):393-99; Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 194-96.

Like many previous fast day jeremiads, Kirkland's pointed to lapses in both religion and morals.

> We are more or less chargeable with infidelity, impiety, profaneness, and a disregard for the divine word and institutions. We must acknowledge the dissoluteness of manners, the unbounded passion for wealth, show and dissipation, too conspicuous among us, the neglect of fairness and a sacred regard to contracts..., the declension of family discipline, the virulent spirit of party, the hatred of good government, the distrust, the abuse, and defamation of great and good men in public office.

Moving on to hazards peculiar to the time, he complained that individuals, "called philosophers,...aimed at the subversion of hierarchy, by plucking from the mind all religion." Moreover, Kirkland objected to the audience they cultivated: "The writings of these votaries of reason, are kindly circulated among people of all classes, to show them that they have been hood-wink'd and priest-ridden." Along with many of his contemporaries in the pulpit, he connected the crumbling of religious authority with unwholesome political contests. "The spirit of party...is ever tending to a ruinous excess." In calling on his listeners to "submit to all the laws without distinction," Kirkland also urged them to defer to their rulers because "the men, to whom are committed the affairs of government...have better means and not weaker motives to do right than the people at large."[67]

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[66] John T. Kirkland, A Sermon, Delivered on the 9th of May, 1798 (Boston: John Russell, 1798), pp. 8-9; Nash, "American Clergy," pp. 399-412; May, Enlightenment, pp. 255-58, 263-73; Richard Buel, Jr., Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics, 1789-1815 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 167-76.

In a eulogy prepared in June 1798, Kirkland anticipated another theme of his Phi Beta Kappa oration. Stressing the inadequacy of human reason as a guide to action and morality, he warned Americans against viewing their lives as "the production of giddy chance or blind fate." While he discountenanced "sloth," Kirkland absolutely abhorred anyone who "surrendered to 'heedless rambling impulse,' to ungoverned passions, to insatiable appetites, to wild fancies." Furthermore, he asserted the holy obligation of "making comfortable and decent provision for the outward circumstances of ourselves, and those connected with us." Essentially, Kirkland feared that skeptical philosophy would interfere with the worldly interests he valued.[68]

In his speech to the Phi Beta Kappa, as in his fast day sermon, Kirkland sought to alert the gathering to the dangers threatening America. He characterized the era as a period "when not only her rights are invaded, and her fame reproached, but a deadly potion is held to her mouth, and a murderous dagger aimed at her bosom." In France, Kirkland claimed, the "misconception, or perversion," of a basic pre-

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[67] Kirkland, Sermon on the 9th of May, pp. 12-15, 19, 21; Nash, "American Clergy," pp. 399-412; May, Enlightenment, pp. 255-59, 266-73; Richard Buel, Jr., Securing the Revolution, pp. 167-76.

[68] John T. Kirkland, A Sermon, Delivered at the Interment of the Rev. Jeremy Belknap, D.D. (Boston: Manning & Loring, [1798]), pp. 7-9; Daniel W. Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 61-62.

cept, "THAT ALL MEN ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL," had "annihilated society." When he associated with French deeds the words "liberty and equality," he saw them as "the agents of envenomed envy, of phrenzied ambition, and insatiate avarice, commissioned to go forth into the nations, and convert man into a brute, kingdoms into theatres of blood, and society into a dreary waste." Kirkland was saying that this aggressiveness was bringing the menace across the Atlantic: "We could not preserve our connexion with our Gallic ally in her present state, without the loss of freedom and virtue."[69]

While he excoriated this foreign enemy for sowing "the seeds of her democracy, her infidelity, and immorality," Kirkland also enumerated internal factors that made the United States more unruly than he liked.

> Our contest for independence, by keeping our rights so much in view, drew our attention from our duties....The interruption of the course of justice, the fluctuation of property, the paper medium and tender laws, and the foreign connexions, which sprung out of war, were so many channels for the introduction of licentiousness.

Whatever the origin of "the demons, infidelity, ambition, and faction," he did not want them to undermine the political and social organizations that had functioned to his advantage.[70]

Kirkland's stance forced him to reinterpret the colonists' separation from England. "Since revolution has come to mean subversion, it means too much to be applied to that alteration in our political relations made by independence." Reversing the argument he had offered three years earlier, he denied that the country's founders had any originality in their plans: "We contended for preservation, not acquisition, to keep the rights we had, rather than to gain those we never had."[71]

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[69] Kirkland, Oration, pp. 4, 6-7, 18.

[70] Ibid., Oration, pp. 5, 17.

Kirkland contrasted the American structures he prized with an entirely new system, constructed by reason.

> These _principles_, _habits_, and _institutions_ are...not the nostrums of upstart political quackery; not the novel discoveries of infidel philosophy; not the vagaries of brains, distempered with revolutionary fervor; but they are...founded in wisdom, improved by experience, and evinced the most sufficient barriers, that man can erect, against the inundations of vice, folly, and misery.

Mocking "those wonderful philosophers, who in the plenitude of their wisdom, have no use for the fund accumulated by past ages," he condemned their aspirations to create "a theoretic edifice, destitute of the aid of opinion, habit and attachment." In Kirkland's view, such a fabrication could not possess the power necessary to defend established arrangements. "Difficult enough is the preservation of order with all the aid, which it derives from antiquity, authority, opinion, and habit." Wishing "to settle, not change" the government, he admonished citizens who discovered its defects "to approach them with filial reverence and tenderness, and to cover them with the mantle of a partial, and almost blind affection."[72]

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[71] Ibid., _Oration_, pp. 3, 5, 12, 23.

Kirkland rejoiced that the boundaries confining Americans' freedom went far beyond the usual injuction against "injuring others." Proudly proclaiming that Massachusetts circumscribed "even the rights of conscience," he applauded its policy of allowing into positions of authority "none but those, who profess to be christians." Deeming the vote "a matter of convention and expediency, and not an original universal right of man," Kirkland praised the prevailing restrictions.

> Whilst our Constitutions admit to the privilege of choosing, and being chosen, to public office, as many classes of the society, as consists with the general safety, they reject the doctrine of universal suffrage, which has so much contributed in other countries to pull down the fabric of social order.

Defining "AMERICAN EQUALITY" as "the extension of like privileges to all persons in like circumstances," he explicitly commended it for "secur[ing] the rich from rapacity, no less than the poor from oppression; the high from envy, no less than the low from contempt."[73]

In this discourse, delivered to an assembly that included "ladies," Kirkland undertook a lengthy refutation of Mary Wollstonecraft's Rights of Women. He attacked her assertion "that it is a consequence of the present order to compel woman to resort to art, insincerity, and meanness, in order to supply, by influence the want of prerogative."

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[72] Ibid., Oration, pp. 7-8.

[73] Ibid., Oration, pp. 9-10.

According to Kirkland, women were "as free, as lovely, as respectable, and happy, in their present situation in society, as they would be, if their sexuality of character, and employments were done away." He could not imagine that they might yearn "to exchange...their stations as mistresses of their families...to be lawyers, legislators, and town meeting patriots." The separation of spheres benefited women, Kirkland insisted, because it allocated to them "the object of all government, which is society," and left to men "the drudgery and vexation, the contest and danger of providing the means of securing that object." He complimented "the spirit of christianity" for "making the marriage contract indissoluble, and representing woman as endowed with the same intellectual and moral nature as man." Exaggerating the effectiveness of this stimulus, he maintained that it prevented a man from turning a woman into "the drudge of his indolence, or the instrument of his pleasure." Having ignored the protests against limitations on the political rights of American men, Kirkland seemed sure that he had countered any demands that women were proposing.[74]

When he suggested a form of censorship, however, Kirkland acknowledged the unusualness of his advice, even in a time of sedition laws. He traced "immoral sentiments" to "writings,...which want no confidence of assertion to overawe, no subtilty of argument to perplex, no sprightliness of wit to amuse, and no charms of eloquence to entice." According to Kirkland, "their infectious pages" especially imperiled those "whose minds are immature, and whose habits are unformed." Nevertheless, he expressed his concern for more discriminating readers:

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[74] Shapleigh to Marsh, December 28, 1798; Kirkland, Oration, pp. 10-11, 20-21.

> But the most virtuous need to guard against the effect of familiarity with such enormous vice in blunting the moral sensibility. So pestilential is its nature, that to look at it is dangerous, to look at it with the least indulgence is pollution, to embrace it is death.

Under no conditions would Kirkland trust human reason to withstand "the poison of the skeptical and disorganizing philosophy."[75]

Just as Kirkland celebrated the traditional restraints on the rights of certain categories of people, so he scorned the notion that mere mortals could improve on ethical conventions: "Believe not that discoveries are to be made in morality." On the grounds that the venerableness of institutions mattered more than the logical consistency of their principles, Kirkland vilified the "metaphysical reformers and tyrants" who would treat everyone alike, regardless of personal attachments. "These men cant about universal benevolence, sensibility, and morality." While he remonstrated against uniformity in politics and morals, Kirkland also sought to exclude it from the code of polite behavior.

> Far from our youth be those absurd and unnatural manners, which the innovating spirit of the times has made fashionable, which disregard the gradations and distinctions of nature and society; and...annul the claim of age to respect, and of authority to submission.

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[75] Ibid., Oration, pp. 21-23.

The leveling of rank resulting from the deductions of disinterested reason dismayed him.[76]

For Harvard Kirkland solicited the same reverence that he thought other bulwarks of privilege deserved.

> Let those, who become members of this ancient seminary, be just to its eminent advantages, draw a respectful veil over imperfections more or less inseparable from every human institution; and never permit that spirit of misrule, which scourges the world and meances the state, to disturb and dishonor the chosen retreat.

Referring to colleges as "fountains of knowledge and subordination," he placed the standards of conduct undergraduates learned on a par with the Enlightenment science they studied. Kirkland shared with his audience his misgivings about the pitfalls in the path of scholarship. "Let your literary sons aim as well to be good as great; lest knowledge multiply the objects of desire, whilst it leaves them destitute of principles to direct their choice and pursuit of those objects." He expected his listeners to agree with his analysis of America's precarious situation because he was speaking "in a place, consecrated to the sublime purpose of rearing her guides, her models, and her guardians."[77]

In his Phi Beta Kappa discourse, Kirkland took controversial stands on some of the hotly-contested issues of the day. Unlike Abraham Bishop, however, his sympathies lay with the Federalist administration. The other three surviving addresses from this period did not state their authors' political views so overtly. Nevertheless, none of the speakers expressed any interest in challenging existing distributions of power. Although these orators did not exemplify a uniform interpretation of Enlightenment philosophy, both Chauncey and Kirkland emphasized the dangers of speculative ideas.

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[76] Ibid., Oration, pp. 13, 21-23.

[77] Ibid., Oration, pp. 4, 16-17, 20.

CONCLUSION

"THE DISCONTENT OF THE LITERARY CLASS...," 1800-37

Historians of the early national period have already scrutinized many of the Phi Beta Kappa addresses from 1800 through 1837, the year Ralph W. Emerson pronounced the most famous tribute to the American Scholar. Of the ones that survive, almost all exist in published form. These discourses suggest that advocates of Scottish philosophy did not succeed in making their world secure. Having failed to eradicate social upheavals, they found that some individuals were basing their divisive schemes on "common sense" truths. Emerson studied this supposedly safe configuration of ideas in college and employed it in his formulation of transcendentalism.

During this period, the Phi Beta Kappa expanded its influence. In 1818, a chapter at Union College began sponsoring annual anniversary orations in Schenectady, New York. Bowdoin College inaugurated similar festivities at Brunswick, Maine, in 1825, and Brown University's society started its observances at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1831.[1]

Given the organization's early struggles for recognition, the increase in numbers mattered less than the attention the public routinely gave to the institution's activities. In 1820, a journalist describing the address delivered at Dartmouth declared that "the best judges of composition" were "in the habit of honouring this interesting occasion by their attendance." A few days later a Boston newspaper commented on the size of the audience at the Harvard proceedings: "The throng of company to attend the performances before this body, encreases with every succeeding year."[2]

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[1] See biographical appendix for details.

Observers in Cambridge frequently remarked on the crowded conditions in the church where the Phi Beta Kappa speakers performed on the day after commencement. For much of this time, the celebrations immediately followed Harvard oratorical competitions, which undoubtedly attracted more spectators. In 1829, a daughter of Harvard's president recorded an account of the eagerness with which women sought seats before the morning exhibition. First a large gathering waited by the doors.

> The moment the bolt was pushed,...we all rushed in. There was more strife than yesterday, but pale and trembling, we all found ourselves in our accustomed pew. It was really surprising to see the ladies leap over the tops of the pews. A number of female forms were seen rushing through our pew, and leaping over the highest side of it to those adjoining. They were headed by Mrs. Abbott Lawrence, who certainly deserved to have a degree given her for her powers of jumping.

Not solely interested in the content of the declamations, she and her sister "had a great deal of amusement in looking at the various figures in the opposite gallery and chatting with each other."[3]

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[2] Dartmouth Herald, August 30, 1820; Boston Commercial Gazette, September 2, 1820.

In 1817 a reporter for a Boston journal connected the colorfulness of the event with its significance.

> The number of the literati and of our fair countrywomen, who attend, is a flattering proof of the importance of the society, and of the refinement of our age. The house was almost as full as on the preceding day; and the ladies were much more numerous, and if possible, more fashionably brilliant.

Sixteen years later a committee delegated to evaluate the function of anniversary exercises emphasized their role in augmenting the organization's prestige.[4]

Over the years, the prominence of the Phi Beta Kappa speakers grew. Generally older than those of the eighteenth century, they tended to have have better-established careers when they delivered their addresses. More held political office, and more were making education their profession. Although the orators might have combined their appearances before the society with other business, many travelled long distances from their usual residences.[5]

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[3] John Pierce, "Some Notes on the Anniversary Meetings of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Alpha of Massachusetts, 1803-1848," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 2nd ser., 9(1894):110-43; Maria Sophia Quincy, "The Harvard Commencement of 1829," Harvard Graduates' Magazine 26(1918):580.

[4] Columbian Centinel, August 30, 1817; Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "Report of Committee on Anniversary Celebration," August 28, 1833, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.

[5] See biographical appendix.

The desire to obtain performers with greater stature added difficulties to the procedure, as the chapter archives attest. Increasingly formal arrangements to provide speakers produced large collections of correspondence from individuals who declined the appointment because of more pressing engagements. Several of these letters, including some acceptances, expressed a reluctance to serve precisely because the reputation of the Phi Beta Kappa had achieved such a height. A few noted a disparity between their abilities to excel in their daily pursuits and the skills required to win approval on a literary occasion. One excuse mentioned a dread of disappointing the women in the audience, who expected allusions to popular Romantic authors, like Scott and Byron, from a man accustomed to an active life.[6]

By 1837, when Emerson spoke on the American Scholar, it had become a convention for Phi Beta Kappa orators to address that topic. Taking the role of letters in American life as a theme did not prevent orators from raising potentially controversial issues. Causes advocated during this period included arbitration of international disputes, modesty in female dress, and free-market land values. Nor did literary subjects preclude the speakers from embroiling themselves in political disputes that approached the intensity of Abraham Bishop's.[7]

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[6] For general information regarding the search for these orators, see the collections listed in the bibliography under "Descriptions of Orations." More specifically, see William W. Andrews to A. N. Skinner, July 11, 1835, Yale University Archives, New Haven, CT; Leverett Saltonstall to Charles Folsom, March 23, 1827, and William Sullivan to Charles Folsom, July 1, 1833, Boston Public Library, Boston, MA.

A sketch of Alexander H. Everett written in 1842 discussed his Harvard Phi Beta Kappa discourse almost thirty years earlier. Everett considered "the character of Burke...as the philosopher, the statesman, the friend of freedom and America." When he questioned Burke's views on the French Revolution, however, he incurred his listeners' wrath: "These intimations, though moderately expressed, and with no application to our politics, gave dissatisfaction to the Federal portion of the audience, which comprised, probably, nine-tenths of the whole." As was customary, the chapter voted to publish the speech, but the committee failed to carry out its charge.

> The chairman, a strong Federal partisan, was so much scandalized by the heterodox character of the politics, that he abstained from performing his duty, and the address has consequently never been printed.

The author concluded that the nature of the organization had changed in the interim. "The society, which is now what it was intended to be, a purely literary institution, was then a mere political club." Nonetheless, this statement appeared in a periodical with a partisan orientation, the United States Magazine and Democratic Review.[8]

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[7] Richard B. Davis, "Edward Tyrrel Channing's 'American Scholar' of 1818," Key Reporter, Spring 1961. See bibliography of orations for examples of these topics.

[8] "Alexander H. Everett," United States Magazine and Democratic Review 10(1842):462-4.

Over time, both newspapers and literary journals gave more critical attention to Phi Beta Kappa orations. Because these publications had political biases, they often accentuated the points under contention. One account defended the performer at Brown in 1833 against the attacks by the press. "Before the last words of his discourse had died away upon his lips, he is reproached for broaching the heresy of nullification, and what is a still more damnable heresy, for proclaiming doctrines which are not popular in Rhode Island!" At Harvard two years later, another minor furor arose over Theophilus Parson's speech. A sympathetic reviewer mentioned "the abuse bestowed on this oration in an administration print." Although Parsons expounded an elitist interpretation of "the Duties of Educated Men in a Republic," the article contended that he was reflecting the consensus among cultured individuals.

> Men of all parties met at a literary festival on common ground. Here was a theme on which it was the duty of all to think alike. There could exist no political distinctions, no sectional differences.

Like Bishop's adversaries, this writer equated opposition to increased democracy with philosophical neutrality.[9]

To a certain degree, the position of Phi Beta Kappa members in American society had altered between Bishop's confrontation with New Haven Federalists and the subsequent antagonisms some orators encountered in the Age of Jackson. Despite these changes, even Emerson's eloquent calls for reform dissatisfied some critics who did not welcome the era of revolution he was heralding.

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[9] William G. Goddard, "Virgil Maxcy and His Discourse," in The Political and Miscellaneous Writings of William G. Goddard, ed. by Francis W. Goddard, 2 vols. (Providence: Sidney S. Rider & Bro., 1870); New England Magazine 9(1835):303-5.

BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

This appendix contains the basic biographical information about all the Phi Beta Kappa anniversary orators from 1782 through 1837. It furnishes a portion of the data utilized for the generalizations in the text respecting the speakers' personal characteristics. It also provides a definitive list of the orators during this period, unavailable in any other source.

When checked against the manuscript records of each college's organization, the officially published individual catalogs revealed some discrepancies. The archival material seemed more authoritiative because it encompassed correspondence about the celebrations in addition to the secretaries' minutes. Over the years, many invited speakers failed to perform. With two exceptions, the following roster includes only those orators who actually pronounced their discourses to a Phi Beta Kappa audience. The first irregular incident, concerning Abraham Bishop, is detailed in the introduction. The second episode involved William Tudor, who could not attend the 1810 Harvard meeting for which he had prepared an address.

Arranged by the year of exhibition, the individuals' names follow the alphabetical order of the colleges sponsoring the Phi Beta Kappa festivities. As explained in chapter two, for a span of twenty years, the Yale members held two sets of observances, one near commencement and the other in recognition of the association's founding in December. In the appendix, these occasions are designated C-Yale and D-Yale, respectively. The first appearance of James Gould, meant to mark the latter anniversary, did not actully occur until early January 1795, but the event is chronicled under the originally scheduled year and month.

The biographical facts present in briefest outline the sorts of information depicted in greater detail in the text for the orators whose offerings survived. In this form, they supply a context for these fuller sketches. In conjunction with their birth and death dates, situating the speakers' historical frame of reference, their birthplaces to some extent represent the geographic surroundings for their formative experiences. The "Grad" column contains the year they received their undergraduate degrees and the college, if different from the institution holding the ceremonies. This date also indicates the methods and content of the instruction that the performers encountered in college. The occupation entries, established for the time of the celebrations, suggest the individuals' professions but not necessarily their only sources of income. The places of residence roughly signify the amount of inconvenience undertaken to attend, although some orators fit these engagements into other travel plans. An asterisk in the last column shows that the text of the address has been located. The existing discourses are cited in the first part of the bibliography.

The data for most of the speakers came from the major biographical dictionaries, college publications, and professional directories, listed in the bibliography. Occasionally, these sources conflicted or omitted an essential fact. Such circumstances required further research into specialized reference works and, in a few cases, into manuscripts. Sometimes the inadequacy of all possible leads required a qualified judgment to be made. The most tentative of these guesses are signaled with a question mark. Documenting each particularly troublesome entry and all of the references consulted proved too cumbersome for this appendix.

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1782	Harvard	Elijah Paine	1757	Brooklyn, CT	1781	law student	Boston, MA	1842
1783	Harvard	Samuel Kendal	1753	Sherborn, MA	1782	divinity student	Cambridge, MA	1814
1784	Harvard	Joshua Paine	1764	Sturbridge, MA	1784	divinity student	Cambridge, MA	1788
1785	Harvard	Henry Ware	1764	Sherborn, MA	1785	divinity student, teacher	Cambridge, MA	1845
1786	Harvard	John Andrews	1764	Hingham, MA	1786	divinity student	Cambridge, MA	1845
1787	Harvard	Nathaniel Freeman	1766	Sandwich, MA	1787	law student, teacher	Medford, MA	1800
	Harvard	John Lowell	1769	Newburyport, MA	1786	law student	Boston, MA	1840
	C-Yale	Simeon Baldwin	1761	Norwich, CT	1781	lawyer	New Haven, CT	1851 *
	D-Yale	Barnabas Bidwell	1763	Tyringham, MA	1785	tutor	New Haven, CT	1833
1788	Dartmouth	Daniel Chipman	1765	Salisbury, CT	1788	law student	Rutland, VT	1850
	Harvard	John Q. Adams	1767	Braintree, MA	1787	law student	Newburyport, MA	1848 *
	C-Yale	Samuel Austin	1760	New Haven, CT	1783	minister	New Haven, CT	1830
	C-Yale	Eli Bullard	1758	Medway, MA	1787	graduate student	New Haven, CT	1824
	D-Yale	Roger Newton	1764	Greenfield, MA	1785	tutor	New Haven, CT	1789
1789	Dartmouth	Daniel Dana	1771	Ipswich, MA	1788	divinity student, teacher	Exeter, NH	1859
	Harvard	William Emerson	1769	Concord, MA	1789	teacher	Roxbury, MA	1811 *
	D-Yale	Amos Bassett	1764	Derby, CT	1784	tutor	New Haven, CT	1828
1790	Harvard	Thomas W. Hooper	1771	Newburyport, MA	1789	law student	Newburyport, MA [?]	1816 *
	Harvard	Thaddeus M. Harris	1768	Charlestown, MA	1787	divinity student	Cambridge, MA	1842 *
	C-Yale	Jonathan W. Edwards	1772	New Haven, CT	1789	graduate student	New Haven, CT	1831
	C-Yale	William Brown	1770	Tiverton, RI	1789	divinity student	New Haven, CT	1854
	D-Yale	Ebenezer Gay	1766	Suffield, CT	1787	divinity student, tutor	New Haven, CT	1837

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1791	Dartmouth	Josiah Dunham	1769	Lebanon Crank, CT	1789	teacher, newspaper editor	Hanover, NH	1844
	Harvard	Joseph Bartlett	1762	Plymouth, MA	1782	lawyer	Woburn, MA	1827
	C-Yale	Joseph Strong	1770	Coventry, CT	1788	medical student	in transit	1812
	D-Yale	Jonathan W. Edwards	1772	New Haven, CT	1789	graduate student	New Haven, CT	1831 *
1792	Dartmouth	Sheldon Logan	1770	Washington, CT	1791	divinity student [?]	?	1801
	Harvard	John Phillips	1770	Boston, MA	1788	lawyer	Boston, MA	1823
	C-Yale	Timothy Pitkin	1766	Farmington, CT	1785	lawyer, state representative	Farmington, CT	1847 *
	D-Yale	Elijah Waterman	1769	Bozrah, CT	1791	divinity student, private tutor	New Haven, CT	1825
1793	Harvard	Henry D. Ward	1768	Shrewsbury, MA	1791	law student	Weston, MA	1817
	C-Yale	William Johnson	1769	Middletown, CT	1788	lawyer	New York, NY [?]	1848 *
	D-Yale	Jeremiah Atwater	1773	New Haven, CT	1793	graduate student	New Haven, CT	1858
1794	Dartmouth	Daniel Hardy	1773	Bradford, MA	1789	divinity student	Bradford, MA	1833
	Harvard	Charles Coffin	1765	Newbury, MA	1785	physician	Newbury, MA	1820 *
	Harvard	Josiah Quincy	1772	Braintree, MA	1790	lawyer	Boston, MA	1864
	D-Yale	James Gould	1770	Branford, CT	1791	tutor	New Haven, CT	1838
1795	Dartmouth	Seth Williston	1770	Suffield, CT	1791	licensed preacher	Rupert & Dorset, VT	1851 *
	Harvard	William Harris	1765	Springfield, MA	1786	teacher, minister	Marblehead, MA	1829
	D-Yale	Josiah Stebbins	1766	Brimfield, MA	1791	tutor	New Haven, CT	1829
1796	Harvard	Timothy Bigelow	1767	Worcester, MA	1786	lawyer, state representative	Groton, MA	1821 *
	D-Yale	Charles Chauncey	1777	New Haven, CT	1792	law clerk	New Haven, CT	1849

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1797	Dartmouth	Jesse Appleton	1772	New Ipswich, NH	1792	minister	Hampton, NH	1819
	Harvard	George Bradbury	1770	Falmouth, MA	1789	lawyer	Portland, ME	1823
	C-Yale	Charles Chauncey	1777	New Haven, CT	1792	law clerk	New Haven, CT	1849 *
	D-Yale	Ebenezer G. Marsh	1777	Wethersfield, CT	1795	graduate student	New Haven, CT	1803 *
1798	Dartmouth	Judah Dana	1772	Pomfret, CT	1795	lawyer	Fryeburg, ME	1845
	Harvard	John T. Kirkland	1770	Little Falls, NY	1789	minister	Boston, MA	1840 -*
	D-Yale	Henry Davis	1771	East Hampton, NY	1796	tutor	New Haven, CT	1852
1799	Dartmouth	George W. Prescott	1776	Kittery, ME	1795	lawyer [?]	Haverill, MA [?]	1817
	C-Yale	George Tod	1773	Suffield, CT	1795	lawyer	New Haven, CT	1841
1800	Dartmouth	Asa Burton	1752	Stonington, CT	1777	minister	Thetford, VT	1836 *
	Harvard	Abiel Abbot	1770	Andover, MA	1792	minister	Haverhill, MA	1828 *
	C-Yale	Abraham Bishop	1763	New Haven, CT	1778	court clerk, lawyer	New Haven, CT	1844 *
	D-Yale	Warren Dutton	1774	East Haddam, CT	1797	tutor	New Haven, CT	1857
1801	Dartmouth	Eliphalet Gillet	1768	Colchester, CT	1791	minister	Hallowell, ME	1848
	Harvard	Francis D. Channing	1775	Newport, RI	1794	lawyer	Cambridge, MA	1810
	C-Yale	Seth P. Staples	1776	Canterbury, CT	1797	lawyer	New Haven, CT	1861
	D-Yale	Bancroft Fowler	1775	Pittsfield, MA	1796	tutor	New Haven, CT	1856
1802	Dartmouth	Asa McFarland	1769	Worcester, MA	1793	minister	Concord, NH	1827 *
	Harvard	Joseph McKean	1776	Ipswich, MA	1794	minister	Milton, MA	1818
	C-Yale	John Wales	1783	New Haven, CT	1801	law student	New Haven, CT	1863
	D-Yale	Eli Ives	1779	New Haven, CT	1799	physician	New Haven, CT	1861 *
1803	Harvard	John Pipon	1762	Boston, MA	1792	minister	Tauton, MA	1821
	D-Yale	Isaac C. Bates	1779	Granville, MA	1802	law student	New Haven, CT	1845

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1804	Dartmouth	Stephen P. Webster	1771	Haverhill, NH	1792 Harv.	teacher	Haverhill, NH	1841 *
	Harvard	John Allyn	1767	Barnstable, MA	1785	minister	Duxbury, MA	1833
	C-Yale	Gideon Tomlinson	1780	Stratford, CT	1802	law student	New Haven, CT	1854
	D-Yale	Jeremiah Evarts	1781	Sunderland, VT	1802	law student	New Haven, CT	1831
1805	Dartmouth	John Vose	1766	Bedford, NH	1795	teacher, justice of peace	Atkinson, NH	1840 *
	Harvard	Oliver Fiske	1762	Brookfield, MA	1787	physician	Worcester, MA	1837 *
	Harvard	Peter O. Thacher	1776	Malden, MA	1796	lawyer	Boston, MA	1843
	C-Yale	George Hoadley	1781	North Branford, CT	1801	tutor	New Haven, CT	1857
	D-Yale	John Hall	1783	Ellington, CT	1802	tutor	New Haven, CT	1847
1806	Dartmouth	Daniel Webster	1782	Salisbury, NH	1801	lawyer	Boscawen, NH	1852 *
	Harvard	Thomas B. Adams	1772	Braintree, MA	1790	lawyer, state representative	Quincy, MA	1832 *
	D-Yale	Samuel F. Jarvis	1786	Middletown, CT	1805	divinity student	New Haven, CT	1851 *
1807	Harvard	Theodore Dehon	1776	Boston, MA	1795	minister	Newport, RI	1817 *
	Yale	Nathan Johnson	1779	Southborough, MA	1802	lawyer	Hartford, CT	1852
1808	Dartmouth	Nicholas Emery	1776	Exeter, NH	1795	lawyer	Portland, ME	1861
	Harvard	James Richardson	1771	Medfield, MA	1797	lawyer	Dedham, MA	1858 *
1809	Dartmouth	Elijah Parish	1762	Lebanon, CT	1785	minister	Byfield, MA	1825
	Harvard	Joseph S. Buckminster	1784	Portsmouth, NH	1800	minister	Boston, MA	1812 *
	Yale	Elijah Waterman	1769	Bozrah, CT	1791	minister	Bridgeport, CT	1825
1810	Harvard	William Tudor	1779	Boston, MA	1796	business agent, state representative	Boston, MA	1830 *
	Harvard	William Allen	1784	Pittsfield, MA	1802	librarian	Cambridge, MA	1868

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1811	Dartmouth	Francis Brown	1784	Chester, NH	1805	minister	North Yarmouth, ME	1820
	Harvard	John Stickney	1784	Newbury, MA	1804	lawyer	Boston, MA	1833
	Yale	Leonard E. Wales	1788	New Haven, CT	1807	lawyer	New Haven, CT	1823
1812	Dartmouth	John Brown	1786	Brooklyn, CT	1809	tutor	Hanover, NH	1839
	Harvard	James Savage	1784	Boston, MA	1803	lawyer	Boston, MA	1873
	Yale	Isaac M. Ely	1787	Huntington, CT	1806	lawyer	New York, NY	1845
1813	Dartmouth	James Brackett	1782	Lee, NH	1805	lawyer	Cherry Valley, NY	1852
	Harvard	Alexander H. Everett	1790	Boston, MA	1806	lawyer, writer	Boston, MA	1847
1814	Dartmouth	Josiah Dunham	1769	Lebanon Crank, CT	1789	teacher, Vermont secretary of state	Windsor, VT	1844
	Harvard	George Ticknor	1791	Boston, MA	1807 Dart.	lawyer, scholar	Boston, MA	1871
	Yale	Samuel J. Hitchcock	1786	Bethlehem, CT	1809	law student, tutor	New Haven, CT	1845 *
	Yale	Moses Hatch	1780	Kent, CT	1800	lawyer	Danbury, CT	1820
1815	Dartmouth	Richard Fletcher	1788	Cavendish, VT	1806	lawyer	Salisbury, NH	1869
	Harvard	William Tudor	1779	Boston, MA	1796	editor	Boston, MA	1830 *
1816	Dartmouth	Nathaniel A. Haven	1790	Portsmouth, NH	1807 Harv.	lawyer	Portsmouth, NH	1826 *
	Harvard	Francis C. Gray	1790	Salem, MA	1809	lawyer, scholar	Boston, MA	1856 *
	Yale	John Chester	1785	Wethersfield, CT	1804	minister	Albany, NY	1829
1817	Dartmouth	Daniel Dana	1771	Ipswich, MA	1788	minister	Newburyport, MA	1859 *
	Harvard	William Crafts	1787	Charleston, SC	1805	author, lawyer	Charleston, SC	1826 *
	Yale	Elisha Mitchell	1793	Washington, CT	1813	tutor	New Haven, CT	1857

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1818	Dartmouth	Henry Bond	1790	Watertown, MA	1813	physician	Concord, NH	1859
	Harvard	Edward T. Channing	1790	Newport, RI	1807	editor	Boston, MA	1856 *
	Union	John Chester	1785	Wethersfield, CT	1804 Yale	minister	Albany, NY	1829
	Yale	Gardiner Spring	1785	Newburyport, MA	1805	minister	New York, NY	1873
1819	Dartmouth	Augustus Peabody	1779	Andover, MA	1803	lawyer	Boston, MA	1852
	Harvard	John Brazer	1789	Worcester, MA	1813	professor	Cambridge, MA	1846
	Union	Arthur J. Stansbury	1781	New York, NY	1799 Colum.	minister	Albany, NY	1845
1820	Dartmouth	William Chamberlain	1797	Peacham, VT	1818	professor	Hanover, NH	1830
	Harvard	John G. King	1787	Salem, MA	1807	lawyer, state representative	Salem, MA	1857
	Union	T. Romeyn Beck	1791	Schenectady, NY	1807	medical professor, teacher, physician	Albany, NY	1855
	Yale	Alexander M. Fisher	1794	Franklin, MA	1813	professor	New Haven, CT	1822
1821	Dartmouth	Kiah Bailey	1770	Brookfield, MA	1793	minister	Newcastle, ME	1857
	Harvard	John C. Gray	1793	Salem, MA	1811	lawyer	Boston, MA	1881 *
	Union	Samuel L. Mitchill	1764	North Hempstead, NY	1786 MD-Edin.	medical professor	New York, NY	1831 *
	Yale	Rufus Woodward	1793	Torringford, CT	1816	tutor	New Haven, CT	1823
1822	Dartmouth	Daniel Oliver	1787	Marblehead, MA	1806 Harv.	professor, physician	Hanover, NH	1842
	Harvard	William J. Spooner	1794	Boston, MA	1813	lawyer	Boston, MA	1824 *
	Yale	James G. Percival	1795	Kensington, CT	1815	poet (trained as physician)	New Haven, CT	1856 *

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1823	Dartmouth	Rufus Choate	1799	Hog Island, MA	1819	lawyer	Danvers, MA	1859
	Harvard	Henry H. Fuller	1790	Princeton, MA	1811	lawyer	Boston, MA	1852
	Union	DeWitt Clinton	1769	Little Britain, NY	1786 Colum.	candidate for governor	Albany & New York, NY	1828 *
1824	Dartmouth	Samuel L. Knapp	1783	Newburyport, MA	1804	newspaper editor	Boston, MA	1838 *
	Harvard	Edward Everett	1794	Dorchester, MA	1811	professor	Cambridge, MA	1865 *
	Union	Eliphalet Nott	1773	Ashford, CT	1796	college president	Schenectady, NY	1866 *
1825	Bowdoin	Prentiss Mellen	1764	Sterling, MA	1784 Harv.	state chief justice	Portland, ME	1840
	Dartmouth	Charles B. Hadduck	1796	Salisbury, NH	1816	minister, professor	Hanover, NH	1861 *
	Harvard	Nathaniel Frothingham	1793	Boston, MA	1811	minister	Boston, MA	1870 *
	Yale	James Gould	1770	Branford, CT	1791	law professor	Litchfield, CT	1838 *
1826	Bowdoin	Ichabod Nichols	1784	Portsmouth, NH	1802 Harv.	minister	Portland, ME	1859
	Dartmouth	Ichabod Bartlett	1786	Salisbury, NH	1808	representative in Congress, lawyer	Portsmouth, NH	1853
	Harvard	Joseph Story	1779	Marblehead, MA	1798	Supreme Court justice	Salem, MA & Washington, DC	1845 *
	Union	Samuel Young	1779	Lenox, MA	none	state representative, state speaker	Ballston Spa, NY	1850 *
	Yale	James A. Hillhouse	1789	New Haven, CT	1808	retired entrepreneur	New Haven, CT	1841 *
1827	Bowdoin	Asher Ware	1782	Sherborn, MA	1804 Harv.	US district judge	Portland, ME	1873 *
	Harvard	James Walker	1794	Burlington, MA	1814	minister	Charlestown, MA	1874 *
	Yale	Denison Olmstead	1791	East Hartford, CT	1813	professor	New Haven, CT	1859 *

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1828	Bowdoin	Benjamin Tappan	1788	Newbury, MA	1805 Harv.	minister	Augusta, ME	1863
	Dartmouth	Frederick Hall	1780	Grafton, VT	1803	college president	Baltimore, MD	1843 *
	Harvard	Jonathan Porter	1791	Medford, MA	1814	lawyer	Boston, MA	1859
	Union	Alfred Conkling	1789	Amagansett, NY	1810	federal judge	Albany, NY	1874 *
	Yale	William Maxwell	1784	Norfolk, VA	1802	editor, lawyer	Norfolk, VA	1857
1829	Bowdoin	Peleg Sprague	1793	Duxbury, MA	1812 Harv.	senator	Hallowell, ME	1880 *
	Harvard	Convers Francis	1795	Menotomy, MA	1815	minister	Watertown, MA	1863
	Union	John W. Taylor	1784	Charlton, NY	1803	representative in Congress, lawyer	Ballston Spa, NY	1854 *
	Yale	William M. Holland	1804	Belchertown, MA	1824	lawyer	Hartford, CT	1842
1830	Bowdoin	Charles S. Daveis	1788	Portland, ME	1807	law professor, boundary negotiator	Portland, ME	1865 *
	Dartmouth	John D. Willard	1799	Lancaster, MA	1819	lawyer	Troy, NY	1864
	Harvard	Orville Dewey	1794	Sheffield, MA	1814 Will.	minister	New Bedford, MA	1882 *
	Yale	Thomas S. Grimke	1786	Charleston, SC	1807	state senator, lawyer	Charleston, SC	1834 *
1831	Bowdoin	Samuel P. Newman	1797	Andover, MA	1816 Harv.	professor, acting college president	Brunswick, ME	1842
	Brown	Francis Wayland	1796	New York, NY	1813 Union	college president	Providence, RI	1865 *
	Harvard	James T. Austin	1784	Boston, MA	1802	state senator, lawyer	Boston, MA	1870 *
	Union	Gilbert McMaster	1778	Belfast, Ireland	none	minister	Duanesburgh, NY	1854
	Yale	James Kent	1763	Frederickstown, NY	1781	law professor	New York, NY	1847 *

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1832	Bowdoin	Alfred Johnson	1789	Newburyport, MA	1808	judge	Belfast, ME	1852
	Brown	Theron Metcalf	1784	Franklin, MA	1805	lawyer	Dedham, MA	1875 *
	Dartmouth	George Kent	1796	Concord, NH	1814	lawyer, banker	Concord, NH	1884 *
	Harvard	Jared Sparks	1789	Willington, CT	1815	historian	Boston, MA	1866 *
1833	Bowdoin	William Allen	1784	Pittsfield, MA	1802 Harv.	college president	Brunswick, ME	1868 *
	Brown	Virgil Maxcy	1785	Attleborough, MA	1804	US treasury lawyer	Annapolis, MD	1844 *
	Dartmouth	George A. Simmons	1791	Lyme, NH	1816	lawyer	Keeseville, NY	1857
	Union	Benjamin F. Joslin	1796	Exeter, RI	1821	physician, professor	Schenectady, NY	1861 *
	Yale	Edward Everett	1794	Dorchester, MA	1811 Harv.	representative in Congress	Cambridge, MA	1865 *
1834	Bowdoin	Alexander H. Everett	1790	Boston, MA	1806 Harv.	state senator, editor	Boston, MA	1847 *
	Brown	Asher Robbins	1761	Wethersfield, CT	1782 Yale	senator	Newport, RI	1845 *
	Harvard	William H. Gardiner	1796	Boston, MA	1816	lawyer	Boston, MA	1822 *
	Yale	James A. Hillhouse	1789	New Haven, CT	1808	retired entrepreneur	New Haven, CT	1841 *
1835	Bowdoin	Alpheus S. Packard	1798	Chelmsford, MA	1816	professor	Brunswick, ME	1884
	Brown	Alexis Caswell	1799	Taunton, MA	1822	professor	Providence, RI	1877 *
	Dartmouth	Zedekiah S. Barstow	1790	Canterbury, CT	1813 Yale	minister	Keene, NH	1873
	Harvard	Theophilus Parsons	1797	Newburyport, MA	1815	lawyer	Boston, MA	1882 *
	Union	Joseph Penney	1793	Ardahy, Ireland	1813 Glasgow	college president	Clinton, NY	1860
	Yale	William W. Andrews	1810	Windham, CT	1831	minister	Kent, CT	1897 *

Biographical Information

Year	Place	Name	Born	Birthplace	Grad	Occupation	Residence	Died
1836	Bowdoin	Caleb Cushing	1800	Salisbury, MA	1817 Harv.	representative in Congress	Newburyport, MA	1879
	Brown	William G. Goddard	1794	Johnston, RI	1812	professor	Providence, RI	1846 *
	Dartmouth	Ira Perley	1799	Boxford, MA	1822	lawyer	Concord, NH	1874
	Brown	Francis Wayland	1796	New York, NY	1813 Union	college president	Providence, RI	1865
	Yale	James A. Hillhouse	1789	New Haven, CT	1808	retired entrepreneur	New Haven, CT	1841 *
1837	Bowdoin	Joseph R. Ingersoll	1786	Philadelphia, PA	1804 Prin.	representative in Congress, lawyer	Philadelphia, PA	1868 *
	Brown	George S. Hillard	1808	Machias, ME	1828 Harv.	lawyer, editor	Boston, MA	1879
	Dartmouth	Charles D. Cleveland	1802	Salem, MA	1827	headmaster	Philadelphia, PA	1869
	Harvard	Ralph W. Emerson	1803	Boston, MA	1821	writer, lecturer	Concord, MA	1882 *
	Union	Daniel D. Bernard	1796	East Hartford, CT	1818 Will.	lawyer, state representative	Albany, NY	1861 *
	Yale	Horace Bushnell	1802	Bantam, CT	1827	minister	Hartford, CT	1876 *

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

PHI BETA KAPPA ORATIONS, 1787-1837

A list of Phi Beta Kappa orations first appeared in *A Bibliography of the Phi Beta Kappa Society* (New York: Elisha Parmele Press, 1928) by Clark S. Northup. For each address, he recorded all the editions he could locate. Northup, however, could not track down elusive items through clues available in the sophisticated research tools produced in the last half century. Almost thirty years later, Steele M. Kennedy's "Emerson's 'The American Scholar,' and the Other Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Orations" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1956) added the two speeches copied into chapter's register to the inventory. His study summarized the contents of the discourses but did not analyze their historical context. The only other examination of these sources, "Gentlemen of Letters in a Democracy: Phi Beta Kappa Orations, 1788-1865" (Ph.D. dissertaion, University of Minnesota, 1960), by Clarence C. Mondale, looked at them from a literary perspective. He found several texts in early nineteenth century periodicals, including some that had previously existed in manuscript.

The following catalog, arranged chronologically by college, adheres to Northup's format. Other scholars will undoubtedly improve on it once they have access to computerized directories of archival material. Thanks to advances in the last twenty years, this compilation has thirteen entries not in other Phi Beta Kappa bibiliographies. They materialized primarily from guides to manuscript collections, from searches in the libraries of each college, from indexes to nineteeth century periodicals, and from the biographies of the orators.

Unlike Northup's, this table does not list every edition. When performers published their compositions *at the time of delivery* or shortly thereafter, only that version is mentioned. As much as fifteen years elapsed between the anniversary and the appearance of Harvard addresses in the *Literary Miscellany*. Since the wording differs somewhat from the manuscripts in the university archives, those citations appear as well. The same rule applies to Jared Sparks's 1832 discourse. Where a speaker's papers have been printed in a scholarly edition, the reference to the original collection is not given.

Bowdoin

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1829 Sprague, Peleg. "Address Before the PBK - Bowdoin College - in 1829." Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME.

1830 Daveis, Charles S. "The Philosophy of Literature in Its Influence Upon the Affairs of Life." Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries, New York, NY.

1833 Allen, William. "Congress of Nations." *American Quarterly Observer* 2(1834):5-24.

1834 Everett, Alexander H. *An Address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Bowdoin College, on the Present State of Polite Learning in England and America, Delivered at Brunswick, Me., September 3, 1834*. Boston: Charles Bowen, 1834.

1837 Ingersoll, Joseph R. *An Address Delivered Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Alpha of Maine, In Bowdoin College, Brunswick, September 7, 1837*. Brunswick, ME: n.p., 1837.

Brown

1831 Wayland, Francis. *A Discourse on the Philosophy of Analogy, Delivered Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Rhode Island, September 7, 1831*. Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, & Wilkins, 1831.

1832 Metcalf, Theron. *An Address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University*. Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, & Holden, 1833.

1833 Maxcy, Virgil. *A Discourse Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University*. Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, & Holden, 1833.

1834 Robbins, Asher. *A Discourse Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University*. Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, & Holden, 1834.

1835 Caswell, Alexis. "Importance of the Mathematical Studies, Considered as a Branch of a Liberal Education." *Biblical Repository* 7(1836):1-18.

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Dartmouth

1795 Williston, Seth. "Cruelty Towards the Bestial Race Discountenanced, and Humanity Recommended, in An Oration." Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH.

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1816 Haven, Nathaniel A. "Address Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Dartmouth College, Delivered August 18, 1816." In *The Remains of Nathaniel Appleton Haven*, pp. 24-35. Edited by George Ticknor. [Cambridge: Hilliard, Metcalf, & Co.], 1827.

1817 Dana, Daniel. *An Address Delivered at the Anniversary of the New-Hampshire Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Dartmouth College, August 26th, 1817*. Exeter, NH: Charles Norris, 1817.

1824 Knapp, Samuel L. *An Oration, Pronounced Before the Society of Phi Beta Kappa, at Dartmouth College, August 19, 1824*. Boston: A. Sampson, 1824.

1825 Hadduck, Charles B. *An Oration, Pronounced Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Dartmouth College, August 25, 1825*. Concord, NH: Jacob B. Moore, 1825.

1828 Hall, Frederick. *An Oration on the Importance of Cultivating the Sciences: Delivered at Dartmouth College, Before the New Hampshire Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa, August 21, 1828*. Baltimore: J. Robinson, 1828.

1832 Kent, George. *An Oration, Pronounced at Dartmouth College, August 23, 1832, Before the New-Hampshire Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa Society*. Concord, NH: Moses G. Atwood, 1832.

Harvard

1788 Adams, John Q. "An Oration." In *Diary of John Quincy Adams*, 2:447-52. Edited by David G. Allen, Robert J. Taylor, Marc Friedlaender, and Celeste Walker. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

1789 Emerson, William. "An Oration, Delivered Sept. 5th 1789, in the Chapel of Harvard College, at the Request of the PBK Society." In Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, "A Register of the Phi Beta Kappa," pp. 40-48. Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.

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1798 Kirkland, John T. *An Oration, Delivered, at the Request of the Society of PBK, in the Chapel of Harvard College, on the Day of Their Anniversary, July 19, 1798*. Boston: John Russell, 1798.

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Archives in the libraries of the colleges with Phi Beta Kappa chapters have collections of documents that chronicle the origin and development of the anniversary celebrations. The following list designates the items relevant to the discussion in the preceding chapters of the role played by the orations in enhancing the organization's public image. It includes not only the societies' records and correspondence but also diary accounts, newspaper reports, and reviews from periodicals.

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Until America's bicentennial, only a few works attempted to draw connections between the social transformations and the intellectual currents of the late eighteenth century. Several studies central to this project appeared since the latter half of the 1970s. Henry F. May's *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) categorizes the varieties of Enlightenment thought while summarizing the political context. The collection edited by Alfred F. Young, *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976) provides numerous essays that present a helpful theoretical framework for the various aspects of the War for Independence. Many of the authors represented there have since published books elaborating on their earlier themes. Three particularly useful in writing this dissertation were Eric Foner's *Tom Paine and*

Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), Dirk Hoerder's Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massachusetts, 1765-1780 (New York: Academic Press, 1977), and Edward Countryman's A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). Other books, combining both these approaches while concentrating on the social elements, have demonstrated their merit to researchers in this field: Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), Joseph J. Ellis, After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979), Robert A. Gross, The Minutemen and Their World (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), and Gary Nash, The Urban Crucible (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

The investigation of social changes in this study has relied primarily on nineteenth-century local histories and a multitude of biographical sources. Certain modern works, however, were extremely valuable in formulating the insights treated here. Three recent articles proved especially crucial in the conceptualization of the development of the household mode of production: Christopher Clark, "Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," Journal of Social History

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